

3 – Committee Transcripts

Index

Wednesday, 1 February 2006	
Doc30	Page 132
Thursday, 16 February 2006	
Doc31	Page 145
Thursday, 23 March 2006	
Doc32	Page 148
Wednesday, 5 April 2006	
Doc33	Page 159
Thursday, 11 May 2006	
Doc34	Page 171
Thursday, 15 June 2006	
Doc35	Page 193
Wednesday, 28 June 2006	
Doc36	Page 217
Thursday, 28 September 2006	
Doc37	Page 243
Wednesday, 11 October 2006	
Doc38	Page 267

Doc30

Wednesday, 1 February 2006

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 10.36 a.m. a 10.50 a.m.
The meeting adjourned between 10.36 a.m. and 10.50 a.m.*

**Yr Adolygiad o Bêl-droed
The Football Review**

[1] **Rosemary Butler:** Thank you for coming back so promptly. And now for something completely different, as they used to say in *Monty Python*. We are going to have the first session on our football review. We need to work out terms of reference for the review and decide who we wish to invite to give evidence.

[2] I am delighted that Huw Jones, the chief executive of the Sports Council for Wales, has agreed to give us an overview, a snapshot, of where football is across Wales. So we will all have a level playing field to start from, if that is not too much of a pun. Huw will give us a presentation and we will ask questions of him. We will then look at the kind of criteria that we could set for the parameters of the review. Welcome, Huw. Would you like to start?

[3] **Mr Jones:** Thank you for the invitation. It is a great pleasure to be with you. I introduce my colleague, Manon Roberts. Manon is a senior national governing body development officer with us and one of her many responsibilities is to do with football liaison, so that is why she is here today and I am grateful to her for producing the paper for you on football in the community. I also ought to thank Neil Ward, the general manager of the Football Association of Wales Trust, who was mainly instrumental in producing the second paper that you have, which is on the organisation and structure of football in Wales. I am sure that when Neil comes before the committee, he will be able to give you further information on that.

[4] I thought that, rather than talk to the specific papers, which you have an opportunity to read and review, I would give you some thoughts about what I think are the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the development of football in Wales. This is very much a personal overview, but most people would probably agree with the simple strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis that I am going to give you, because it is very much at a high level.

[5] I will start with the strengths of football in Wales. Its main strength—and the Minister has already referred to this this morning—is its profile, which is massive in Wales in terms of the television and the media. The media, in particular, is dominated by football and rugby. In fact, one of the problems that we have generally in terms of sport in Wales is raising the profile of other sports because of the dominance of football and rugby, particularly for men. We do not need to do that for football and rugby generally, and that is a massive strength that we need to capitalise on.

[6] Football is 130 years old. The governing body of football in Wales is one of the oldest governing bodies of sport, not only in football, but in the world. So it has a history and a very strong structure that we can build upon. Very importantly, football also has general public interest. Whether we are talking about the national team's performance in events such as the European world championship qualifiers, the performance of professional teams, such

as Cardiff City Football Club, or participation generally, there is a massive public interest in football.

[7] There is a very big voluntary sports club infrastructure that we can build upon and that is very important. My guess is that around about 40 per cent of all voluntary sports clubs in Wales are football clubs.

[8] Another strength is the work of the FAW Trust and when you receive evidence from it, you will see the good work that it has been doing in recent times. It has had a turbulent history over the last 10 years and it has had some difficult times. There have been times when we have had to be very careful in terms of funding but it has come through that, the trustees have been very supportive and it is doing some very good work. It has some very good people on the ground and very good links, particularly with local authorities.

[9] Finally on the strengths, it is delivering in terms of the Welsh Assembly Government's agenda and on some of the things that you have already touched upon this morning, for example, the contribution to regeneration, issues around deprived areas and the women and girls agenda—I think that we have shown the significant growth in girls' participation in football, as well as opportunities for people with disabilities. Therefore, looking at that broader agenda is very much one of its strengths.

[10] On weaknesses, one thing that football suffers from is a lack of strategic cohesion and direction. Many good bodies do a lot of good work, but, overall, there is a lack of strategic direction there. There is also a lack of transparency in terms of, particularly, the FAW and how it deals with other bodies. That is a weakness, and I will come back to that point later.

[11] Although it has a strength in relation to the number of voluntary sports clubs, one of its weaknesses is that many of those voluntary sports clubs are quite small. They tend to be single-team sports clubs, so you do not always get economies of scale, nor, in many of them, the ability to develop, build and create more opportunities to expand into other teams to create opportunities for children and young people. Only a limited number of clubs have the capacity to do that.

[12] Although we have a large voluntary sector, much of it is untrained and unqualified. That is a massive challenge, particularly for the FAW Trust, to which it is committed, trying to get better-qualified coaches and officials, and trying to ensure that administrators have the right qualifications to be able to develop clubs. In terms of how we get to professional football, there is a difficulty regarding the pathway for young people. Football is different from probably any other sport, where we can create centres of development and excellence, we see the growth in young people through their various age groups, and we can provide squad sessions, and then people get up to national level. It is not quite like that in football. At a young age—11 or 12—people get signed up by professional clubs, and they invariably go off to England; very few of them will stay in Wales in our three professional clubs. Very few of those who do remain land up in professional clubs through the pyramid system that we have.

[13] In terms of opportunities, we have a major opportunity to raise the profile of football. The European championship will be starting again, and there will be massive interest in that, and in Wales's group. That is an opportunity, not just to raise the profile of those matches, but to raise the profile of the contribution of football generally. Football needs to grasp that, and it has not always done so.

[14] In our remit letter, the Minister has announced that he wants us to consider and develop a secondary school scheme. That is another major opportunity for football to expand and develop from that—particularly girls' football, and the interest that could be created in

secondary schools. There is significant latent demand there, which is not being fulfilled at present. There is also this committee's review. This is a real opportunity for football to be able to come here, be positive, show you what it does, tell you the good news stories, and say to you, 'Please can we have your support'. It needs to engage in that process.

[15] On threats facing it, there needs to be more transparency in terms of the FAW and how it deals with other bodies, the Assembly Government and us. It does not have anything to fear. We want people to be open, to tell us where they are and where they are going, and we can make decisions on that basis.

[16] A threat to the development of football generally is if we have poor performances at the European championship. If we start losing some of the initial games, we will not necessarily get the crowds; if we do not get the crowds, the FAW will not get the income, which will make it difficult to further develop football. Therefore, it is vital—and everyone would agree—that we have a good start, as we did in the previous European championship, to generate interest and to fill the Millennium Stadium. Not many countries throughout Europe can boast the record of Welsh football at the start of those European championships, where matches were sold out at the Millennium Stadium on a wet Wednesday night, and people were coming from all over Wales to those matches. It was absolutely fantastic to be able to sell out 70,000 seats for the game against Azerbaijan. It is amazing the interest that has been generated in football. There are real strengths, and there are some weaknesses that need to be addressed. There are some real opportunities for the game, but there are also some threats. I hope that that is a useful overview to help with your review.

11.00 a.m.

[17] **Rosemary Butler:** Thank you, Huw. That was very good, as were your papers. It is important for the committee to understand the sheer numbers of people who take part in football and the delivery of the infrastructure—the pitches that local authorities have to provide and so on. We need to get behind a whole range of issues and trumpet what is happening in football at grass-roots level. As you say, it is important that we have good international results in order to keep the growth going. The point that you made about delivering on the Assembly's Climbing Higher strategy is important. We will go around the table for questions, and I will then suggest some terms of reference for discussion.

[18] **Laura Anne Jones:** Thanks for your presentation, Huw. I love football, and I do not have many friends who do not. I have grown up with it from school but, unfortunately, because I am a girl, I was never allowed to play it in my local comprehensive school. I am now jealous, but very supportive, of the situation that has been created by all the work that has been done. I understand that you and the FAW Trust have increased participation of registered football players by 300 per cent. That is fantastic and I commend you for it.

[19] Unfortunately, we are still way behind England in the development of football and in bringing people up to the higher levels of national football. Unfortunately, that shows in results, but we will get there one day.

[20] Equality of opportunity goes across portfolios. It should not be on the sideline; it should be part of core policy across the board. How are you developing your disabled strategy and your work with black minority ethnic communities? As a general question from the whole committee, where do your responsibilities end and where do the FAW Trust's start? Do you work together all the time? I know that you fund it and that it has to give a presentation to you, but how closely do you work

together to achieve the aims of the Government's strategies and your strategies?

[21] How do you work with schools to identify talent? I come across many parents who cannot afford to send their children to clubs because of the cost of kit and travelling across the country and across the border to games. How are we encouraging national football players, such as Ryan Giggs, who is my hero, to go into schools to support and inspire young people to get involved in the game? Clearly, that strategy works in rugby.

[22] **Rosemary Butler:** Huw, would you briefly answer those questions, and we will then move on?

[23] **Mr Jones:** On relationships and responsibilities between us and the FAW, our responsibility in relation to any governing body of sport is one of ensuring that it is accountable to us. It is not our job to run or deliver that sport, and we do not interfere in the process. We will provide the body with funding based upon its targets and what it achieves against those targets. That is what we have done through the FAW Trust.

[24] We have a different relationship with football to the direct relationship that we have with many other bodies, such as the Welsh Badminton Union, Squash Wales and Tennis Wales. That is because of the establishment of the FAW Trust, which is a separate body to the FAW. This is one of our concerns. The FAW Trust was established 10 years ago with ring-fenced money to develop football in Wales at very much a youth level. We have funded and supported that, and we had additional funding through the Welsh Assembly Government to be able to do that and deliver specific outcomes, which it has done. However, that body is divorced from the FAW itself, and we want to see a much closer relationship between the trust and the FAW, with the FAW taking on much more responsibility for that body because, at the end of the day, it is responsible for not only ruling the game but developing it, and it should not be for the trust to take the final responsibility for that. The trust works closely with the Welsh Schools' Football Association; it is a very close relationship and they are based in the same building. Much of the work on that side must be joined up to ensure that there is no duplication.

[25] In terms of national players and profile, the one thing that we do not have a problem with is the profile of football generally. In terms of how we utilise some of the professional players, that is much more difficult, mainly because the vast majority of the Welsh professional players play in England. Therefore, when they play for Manchester United, Blackburn Rovers or whoever, it is very difficult to get them to come down to St Clears, Aberystwyth or wherever. They have a very limited amount of time available, particularly given the crowded football calendar, so that is quite difficult. However, to be fair to teams such as Swansea City, Wrexham FC, Cardiff City, and some semi-professional teams such as Newport, Merthyr and Colwyn Bay, they have very close links with the community and seek to go out into schools because they recognise that the future of the game relies on those links. I will let Manon answer the equality issue.

[26] **Ms Roberts:** On your question regarding disability, in the new memorandum and articles of association that the trust is about to adopt, it will be charged with developing opportunities for disabled players across the board, from grass roots to national squad for all age groups. It is also in the process of consulting on a policy document with regard to disability football because there are two part-time officers working for the trust as disability co-ordinators in Wales, and its remit, in the first instance, is to establish grass-roots participation in the first two years, from 2006-08, with the focus in 2008-10 on developing national squads. So, a lot of work is being done on disability football.

[27] With regard to black and minority ethnic groups, there is a real focus there. I know that there is a pilot scheme in Cardiff at the moment, and one will also be delivered in Newport, focusing on developing new initiatives to try to embrace people who are unable to take part in football at the current time. So, a lot of initiatives are happening out there on the ground. To return to the disability strategy, embracing the national side, I think that Swansea City is developing a visually impaired programme for local football clubs. That will also be happening in Cardiff, and it hopes to establish something similar in Anglesey in the near future.

[28] **Mr Jones:** One of the things that we have asked the trust to do is try to give you some examples of these sorts of schemes, and there are things such as the Zebra league in Swansea, which has been very good in terms of pulling together BME groups.

[29] **Rosemary Butler:** I agree. In fact, we are planning of having one of our meetings in Swansea at the Liberty Stadium, and, hopefully, examples can be shown to us there.

[30] **Owen John Thomas:** Fel rhywun sydd â phrofiad o chwarae rygbi fel dyn ifanc, gwn fod cyflwr y cae, yr ystafelloedd newid a'r cawodydd yn bwysig iawn. Mae sawl blwyddyn wedi mynd heibio ers imi chwarae rygbi, ond yr wyf yn dal i weld lleoedd lle mae disgwyl i bobl newid a chael cawod sy'n eithaf cyntefig a thlawd—un gawod rhwng 30 o chwaraewyr ar ôl gem rygbi, er enghraifft.

Owen John Thomas: From my experience of playing rugby as a young man, I know that the condition of pitches, changing rooms and showers is extremely important. Many years have passed since I last played rugby, but I still see places where people are expected to change and have showers that are relatively primitive and poor—one shower between 30 players after a rugby match, for example.

11.10 a.m.

[31] A oes modd ichi gydweithio gyda'r awdurdodau lleol i geisio sicrhau bod arian yn cael ei wario ar feysydd i sicrhau bod cyfleusterau modern ar gael er mwyn denu mwy o bobl i chwarae pêl-droed? Yr wyf yn siŵr y byddai mwy o bobl o lawer yn chwarae pe bai'r cyfleusterau yn fwy addas.

Could you work in partnership with the local authorities to try to ensure that money is spent on pitches to ensure that modern facilities are available in order to attract more people to the game? I am sure that many more people would play if the facilities were more suitable.

[32] Mae gennyf gwestiwn ynglŷn â cholli chwaraewyr i'r timau yn Lloegr. Mae'n amlwg fod mwy o arian dros y ffin, a, gan fod rhai clybiau yn gyfoethog iawn, nid yw'n bosibl rhwystro hynny rhag digwydd. A oes modd i'r FAW weithredu gyda'ch cefnogaeth chi, a'n cefnogaeth ni, i stopio hyn rhag digwydd? A oes rôl i chi ac i ni yn hyn o beth?

I have a question that relates to losing players to English teams. It is obvious that there is more money across the border and, as some clubs are extremely rich, it is not possible to prevent that from happening. Can the FAW work, with your support and ours, to prevent this from happening? Can you see a role for yourselves, and for us, in this regard?

[33] **Mr Jones:** Mae problemau difrifol a pharhaol mewn rhai mannau ynghylch ansawdd cyfleusterau a chyflwr rhai o'r meysydd chwarae. Yr ydym yn sôn yn ein papur am yr arian yr ydym wedi ei fuddsoddi ym mhêl-droed. Mae'r rhan fwyaf o'r £5 miliwn o arian cyfalaf wedi cael ei wario ar

Mr Jones: There are serious, ongoing problems in some areas regarding the quality of facilities and the state of some playing fields. In our paper, we mention the money that we have invested in football. Most of the £5 million capital investment has been spent on upgrading changing rooms and playing

uwchraddio ystafelloedd newid a meysydd chwarae. Wedi dweud hynny, mae'r ffaith bod nifer fawr o feysydd chwarae yn ei gwneud hi'n anodd inni sicrhau eu bod yn cael eu cynnal a'u cadw. Mae hynny'n sialens fawr, yn enwedig i awdurdodau lleol.

[34] Mae'r mater a godwyd ynghylch chwaraewyr proffesiynol yn broblem, yn enwedig pan fydd rhieni yn edrych ar eu hopsiynau. Os bydd rhywun yn dod o Manchester United, Arsenal neu Chelsea ac yn dweud, 'Beth am i'ch plentyn chi ddod i chwarae i ni?', gallwn ddyfalu beth fydd yr ateb y rhan fwyaf o'r amser, yn enwedig os yw hynny'n fater o ddewis rhwng Chelsea ac Abertawe neu Gaerdydd. Felly, mae hyn yn broblem. I fod yn deg, mae'r gymdeithas bêldroed yn sylweddoli bod hyn yn broblem. Dros y blynyddoedd, mae gwahanol gymdeithasau dros Brydain wedi cydweithio i edrych ar y broblem hon a sicrhau nad yw plant yn cael eu cymryd i ffwrdd pan maent yn rhy ifanc. Maent yn ceisio eu cadw gartref gan greu mwy o gysylltiadau cymunedol er mwyn i blant ddatblygu a chreu mwy o gysylltiadau gyda thimau proffesiynol yn eu hardaloedd. Mae hi'n sialens.

[35] **Denise Idris Jones:** I have two questions. I hope that you do not mind, because I do not often ask two. We see football being promoted, and you talked about that, Huw. Our area has produced people like Mark Hughes, from Ruabon School—the same school that we went to—Michael Owen, Gary Speed, and Robbie Savage. They went through the school of excellence in Wrexham. My son had a friend who was picked by a scout from Manchester City at a young age. Four times a week, his mother would take him all the way to Manchester City to train, and then bring him back. Every weekend, he would have to travel to play in different matches. However, he was not good enough, and if you are not good enough, you are not good enough; that is the world of football. He now plays for Wrexham and for Wales schoolboys; his name is Neil Taylor. It must be so disheartening for him, having given his life to the world of football, knowing that it is unlikely, now that he is playing for Wrexham, that this will ever come to much.

[36] We have talked about promoting football for girls and, some time ago, my youngest son—who has been a footballer—and I were going to America to visit my friend and, in the checking-in queue, we met Rachel Brown, who is the goalkeeper for England. We spent eight hours with her on this journey to America. She had won a scholarship to Pittsburgh University. She came from Rochdale, and whenever England was playing, they would fly her back to this country. Having said that, at the end, her career will probably be teaching sport at a university. So, this issue of girls' football is a difficult one for me. What is the end result? We have had huge stars, as I mentioned, and we are proud of them, but a lot of people fall in between, do they not?

[37] **Mr Jones:** It is very much, and has been, a challenge for football generally in that young people are recruited and only a small percentage of those will make it to the top. Many of my friends, who were signed up as professional players and with whom I have played, did

fields. Having said that, the fact that there are so many playing fields makes it difficult for us to ensure that they are being properly maintained. That is a considerable challenge, particularly for local authorities.

The issue raised in relation to professional footballers is a problem, particularly when parents consider their options. If someone from Manchester United, Arsenal or Chelsea, were to say, 'What about your child coming to play for us?', we can guess what the answer would be in most cases, particularly if the choice were between playing for Chelsea and playing for Swansea or Cardiff. Therefore, it is a problem, and, to be fair, the football association acknowledges that. Over the years, different associations across Britain have worked together to look at this problem and to ensure that children are not taken away at too young an age. They are trying to keep them at home and trying to create more community links in order for the children to develop, thereby establishing more links with professional teams in their areas. It is a challenge.

not make it because of injury or whatever. The one thing that professional clubs are more conscious of nowadays than they probably were 10 or 15 years ago is the need to educate these young people. They recognise, to be fair to them, that there is a career outside football. They are much better at doing that and at working with further and higher education institutions. Rugby is a very good recent example, and I think that football is looking at that example in terms of modern apprenticeships. That is very helpful. So, many things can be built upon in terms of safeguarding youngsters' careers at the end of the day.

[38] Girls' football is now massive in England, as Laura mentioned earlier. The girls in many of those clubs are almost at a professional level. Ironically, probably the best player—and she is recognised as such—in women's football in England is Welsh; she is a fantastic player called Jane Ludlow, and she plays for Arsenal. However, she is one of the few who we have been able to develop to that very high level. Many of you will know of people like Laura McAllister through her political work more than anything, but Laura captained Wales at football and was a very good footballer. When she worked at the Sports Council for Wales, she won the player of the tournament many times when we had mixed football matches on the artificial pitch at Christmas. There is a big challenge in increasing the profile of girls' football. The media needs to grab hold of that.

[39] **Eleanor Burnham:** I suppose that when there was less of a gap between the top and lower clubs in UK football, there were more opportunities in many respects, but there are probably fewer now because of the structure.

[40] Ar y strwythur, teimlaf fod cymhlethdod. Yr wyf yn hoff o'r lluniau hyn gan eu bod yn ei gwneud yn haws i weld beth sydd yn mynd ymlaen, ond mae cymhlethdod. A deimlwch y dylid edrych ar hyn a'i symleiddio? Pa rôl yn eich barn chi ddylai fod gan arolwg y pwyllgor, faint o ymwybyddiaeth ohono sydd yn y byd pêldroed yng Nghymru a pha fath o ganlyniadau y dylai'r arolwg hwn eu cyflawni?

On the structure, I believe that there is confusion. I like these pictures because they make it easier to see what is going on, but there is confusion. Do you feel that this should be looked at and simplified? What role do you think that this committee's review has, to what degree is the football world in Wales aware of it, and what kind of outcomes should this review achieve?

[41] **Rosemary Butler:** We do not want a long list—

[42] **Eleanor Burnham:** Yn olaf, mae'r papurau hyn yn dda iawn, a dysgais lawer o'u darllen. Fodd bynnag, hoffwn wybod pa ysgolion sydd yn mynd drwy'r rhaglenni achrediad hyn.

Eleanor Burnham: Finally, these papers are excellent, and I have learnt a great deal from them. However, I would to know which schools have gone through these accreditation programmes.

11.20 a.m.

[43] Ar gyfleusterau, meysydd chwarae artiffisial ac yn y blaen, a fyddai'n bosibl inni weld ym mha le y mae'r rhain i gyd? Byddai'n beth da pe bai modd inni gael rhestr lawn o'r cyfleusterau drwy Gymru, a chael gwybod pa rai sydd hefyd yn gyfrifoldeb i lywodraeth leol ac ati. A yw hynny'n iawn, Gadeirydd?

On facilities, artificial turf pitches and so on, would it be possible to see where these pitches are located? It would be useful if we could have a full list of facilities throughout Wales, and have information on the ones for which local authorities have shared responsibility and so on. Is that all right, Chair?

[44] **Rosemary Butler:** We do not want a list of every single football pitch.

[45] **Eleanor Burnham:** Could I have the information on my region then, if that is okay, because I am very interested in what we have in my region?

[46] **Rosemary Butler:** I am just saying that it is a huge task.

[47] **Eleanor Burnham:** I know, but when you look at these—

[48] **Rosemary Butler:** Eleanor, I am just explaining why I would not want to ask anyone to provide us with a list of every football pitch in Wales.

[49] **Eleanor Burnham:** There must be an audit.

[50] **Rosemary Butler:** I doubt that there is, because you have community councils, local authorities, private clubs, and so forth. We have a general picture that we can give you. Unless you would like to take it on personally—

[51] **Eleanor Burnham:** I think that it is an interesting question.

[52] **Rosemary Butler:** It is interesting, but it might be that we can direct people in a slightly more productive way than that. I am not saying that it is impossible, but it will be an awful task to do that.

[53] **Eleanor Burnham:** Each local authority must have a list of the facilities.

[54] **Rosemary Butler:** Not all pitches are owned by local authorities.

[55] **Eleanor Burnham:** Someone must have a list, and I would like to ask, please, Chair, if that can be part of what we are about. Otherwise—

[56] **Rosemary Butler:** I think that the point has been made.

[57] **Mr Jones:** On that last point, Chair, you are right to say that there is no collated list, because there are so many pitches across all of the local authority areas in Wales. We have told local authorities that the challenge is one of matching supply and demand in their areas. To know that there are 4,000 clubs and teams is quite interesting on the face of it, but to know that 4,000 pitches are in north Wales and 2,000 clubs are in south Wales or wherever is not helpful. The important thing is matching supply and demand. A while ago, we produced some guidance for local authorities on how to do that in terms of the use of pitches.

[58] Eleanor also mentioned the structure of football and its potential complexity. The issue relates to who has responsibility for this. There is no doubt that the Football Association of Wales has jurisdiction and responsibility for it. Things like the Welsh premier, the area associations, or whatever, are part of the FAW. It needs to look at that process and at its own governance of the sport in terms of asking, 'Is that the best way forward for the development of the game in Wales?'

[59] We can certainly provide you with information on accreditation. We will contact the trust.

[60] **Rosemary Butler:** Laura, you wanted to come back on this. We will then move on to our terms of reference.

[61] **Laura Anne Jones:** I have a few quick questions. I mentioned earlier that one of the barriers to getting young people into football, developing through clubs, is cost.

What financial support is available for those who simply cannot afford the kit and the travelling costs?

[62] Also, your papers refer to referees. What protection are you putting in place for referees? I see that one of your targets is to encourage more referees into the game. How will we do that when we have so much negative press coverage about the treatment of referees, for example?

[63] **Rosemary Butler:** This must be your last question.

[64] **Laura Anne Jones:** I am lost; I have written down so many things. You touched on your work with local authorities. Is there a disparity between the local authorities? Are some doing a lot of positive work and some doing negative work? Are they all good or are they all bad? What do you think about the local authorities, the work being done, and what they need to do to improve?

[65] **Ms Roberts:** In respect of your first question about cost issues in relation to kits, any new club can apply for a Community Chest award from the sports council to cover the cost of a new kit, new equipment, balls, posts, or anything else that was required. If they needed replacing in a few years' time, the clubs would have to pay. For new clubs and teams, we are here to encourage more and more to join.

[66] You mentioned travel costs. Given that there are so many local clubs now, we are trying to promote local competition. That is part of the trust's work, and we are really trying to encourage them. A key area of work for clubs is to ensure that there are local competitions and local opportunities.

[67] **Laura Anne Jones:** May I just come back on that, Chair?

[68] **Rosemary Butler:** We can ask more questions, sorry Laura, further into the review. We just need to have a basis this morning on which to work out our terms, and then we will bring in people from the leagues, and you can ask those questions to them. So, you can go into much deeper detail further down the review.

[69] **Mr Jones:** Of the figures in our report, which is the £1.2 million and the 2,000 Community Chest awards, the vast majority would be for junior teams, new kit, footballs, cones, bibs and so on, and for coach education to try to improve the situation for them.

[70] The issue of referees and officials is an ongoing challenge in all sports, and it is something that the area associations in particular are grappling with in trying to recruit them. We put additional funding into the north Wales coast association in the year before last, I think, in terms of increasing our recruitment of referees. Obviously, the main thing for them is to have some sort of insurance, because they can be liable, and that is a big barrier these days. If people think that they will be liable and could be up in court, they will say, 'Why bother?'. So, there are major issues there.

[71] Local authorities are variable, and it would not be appropriate for me to name and shame here today. They will be variable—some are very good in terms of their development, while others are not so good. Ultimately, that tends to depend on the individuals who are in post.

[72] **Rosemary Butler:** That gives us a flavour. There will be a great deal of interest from committee members in this review. I put before the Members some suggested terms of reference for the actual review. The future direction and priorities for the development of

football in Wales is the main one, and I think that that is a fairly general point. The effectiveness of the current structure supporting football in Wales, and whether it enables delivery for all and contributes to the Welsh Assembly Government's agenda is another point. It will be interesting to see how it is delivering on that.

[73] **Eleanor Burnham:** So, is that the question that I was asking?

[74] **Rosemary Butler:** I do not know, Eleanor; was it?

[75] **Eleanor Burnham:** It was about the complexity of this particular structure. That is the structure that you are talking about.

[76] **Rosemary Butler:** We like to ask whether it is effective or not. Whether it is complex is another matter.

[77] **Eleanor Burnham:** 'Simplification' is the word that I was looking for.

[78] **Rosemary Butler:** Okay, Eleanor. The second point that I read out was, 'the effectiveness of the current structure supporting football in Wales, whether it enables a delivery for all and contributes to the Welsh Assembly Government's agenda'. I think that that covers—

[79] **Laura Anne Jones:** I think that equality should be in there as well, or does that come under 'delivery for all'?

[80] **Rosemary Butler:** The other one that I want to suggest, if I may, before we open it up for discussion, is that of funding and resources for football, because that is very important, and we have all touched upon that point. The other point that has come up this morning is the relationship between the Football Association of Wales, which is the governing body, and the FAW Trust, which is the development arm. That is an interesting area that we need to pursue. I think that 'the effectiveness of the current structure' would include equality. Do you agree?

[81] **Owen John Thomas:** Mae'n anodd i ni, wrth ichi daflu syniadau atom ar lafar, heb ddim o'n blaenau ni, i ddweud, 'Iawn, mae hynny'n berffaith fel cylch gwaith'. A yw hi'n bosibl inni gael llythyr bach fel y gallwn, erbyn y cyfarfod nesaf, roi sêl bendith ar hynny?
Owen John Thomas: It is difficult for us, while you are throwing ideas at us, without anything in front of us, to say, 'Fine, that is perfect as a remit'. Is it possible for us to have some sort of letter so that, by the next meeting, we can give our seal of approval to that?

[82] **Rosemary Butler:** Absolutely. You do not have to make final decisions this morning, but the sooner we can make those decisions, the better.

[83] **Owen John Thomas:** A yw hynny yn y papur hwn?
Owen John Thomas: Is that in this paper?

[84] **Rosemary Butler:** Yes, but I will just read it again, shall I?

[85] **Owen John Thomas:** Ble yn y papur mae hyn?
Owen John Thomas: Where in the paper is it?

[86] **Eleanor Burnham:** Do we have the paper?

[87] **Rosemary Butler:** I do not think so.

[88] **Owen John Thomas:** Dyna'r **Owen John Thomas:** That is the problem. problem.

[89] **Rosemary Butler:** That is what I am saying. I am suggesting that we look at the future direction and priorities for the development of football in Wales. That is one point, and the other is the effectiveness of the current structure and whether it is delivering on the Welsh Assembly Government's agenda. Funding and resources for football is another, as is the relationship between the FAW and the FAW Trust, because that obviously needs explaining. If anyone has anything else, if you would add it when we circulate the paper and then send it back, that would be helpful. If we e-mail the paper, you can add any suggestions, and we will make the final decision at the next meeting. Is that okay? I did not want to put anything down in too much detail because you would have accused me of coming to a decision before the meeting, Owen John. Did you want to come in on this point, Laura?

11.30 a.m.

[90] **Laura Anne Jones:** I was going to suggest something, but we can do that at a later date. Can we ask you about the people whom we wish to see?

[91] **Rosemary Butler:** I was just moving on to that. We will circulate these, but the suggestion is that we invite the FAW, the FAW Trust, a representative of referees—I mean referees, though they probably feel like refugees sometimes—someone to talk about the Welsh premier league, a football development officer from a local authority, the Welsh Schools' Football Association, someone from the south Wales girls' league, which will be interesting, and the Aberystwyth and district junior league, which I understand is doing really good stuff. We will circulate those, and you can then add any other suggestions that you may have. We can then discuss this at the next meeting.

[92] **Eleanor Burnham:** Will you be calling the area associations, and the Welsh football league as well as the Cymru Alliance league?

[93] **Rosemary Butler:** I will put those on paper, but we cannot call everyone, because, as you realise, there are around 4,000 teams.

[94] **Eleanor Burnham:** No, but in terms of this structure, you have not mentioned the Cymru Alliance league, which refers to north Wales.

[95] **Rosemary Butler:** I have mentioned some other leagues. I will put this in writing and then you can come back to us. However, we need to get these invitations out quite quickly. Lisa? Sorry, I mean Laura. Your name was hidden underneath my papers.

[96] **Laura Anne Jones:** I think that it is important that we get someone from every level, as well as from the girls' and boys' leagues, as you have suggested. However, we should also ask someone who is involved with disability issues. There is that wonderful example in Swansea. It might be interesting to get someone like that in to see how their needs are met.

[97] **Rosemary Butler:** We will do that, as that is a major issue in terms of equality. We have received a written request from Ann Jones AM who wishes to give

evidence to the committee. We will advertise this review and write to anyone and everyone whom we can think of. It will be on the website and we will put it in the press. People can then give us written observations, because we cannot possibly have everyone coming to committee. We can take written observations, as we have done in previous discussions.

[98] **Owen John Thomas:** On the local authority football development officer, I was just wondering how far his remit would reach in terms of football in the area. Would he be able to answer some of the questions regarding why some fields are not marked out and so on? If we are going to draw in more people, you have to have the facilities in place. Would he be in that position, or would we need someone else from a local authority to give us some idea of these things?

[99] **Rosemary Butler:** Well, it might be a 'she' to start with. I am trying to give you a flavour of the areas. The point has been made that we need to cover every area. A football development officer would represent all the football development officers and would talk about the kind of activity that is going on. I understand that every local authority has a football development officer. Is that right?

[100] **Ms Roberts:** Not every local authority has a football development officer in post at the current time, but, as a principle, that is right. There are approximately 17 officers.

[101] **Rosemary Butler:** Right. So, we can look at why some authorities do not have an officer in post. We can talk to them about their facilities, but I do not want to talk about marking out white lines on a Saturday afternoon, if we can help it.

[102] **Owen John Thomas:** Would a development officer be familiar, for example, with the money that a local authority would spend in a year on looking after pitches?

[103] **Rosemary Butler:** If they are worth their salt, they would certainly know those things. If they do not, we will ask someone else.

[104] **Eleanor Burnham:** Ann Jones is a very interesting person. In what capacity is she coming?

[105] **Rosemary Butler:** She has written to us. She heard about the football review and she has asked whether she can give evidence. Any Member can give evidence should they choose to do so.

[106] **Eleanor Burnham:** Does she want to give written evidence?

[107] **Rosemary Butler:** No. She has asked to come to committee. I do not have a problem with that.

[108] **Laura Anne Jones:** I think that there are other people who we need to see more essentially, and so I think that written evidence from Ann would be fine.

[109] **Rosemary Butler:** Well, any Member is entitled to attend any committee meeting. I would not want us to go against that principle. If you want to go to another

committee meeting, I would not want them to say that you must give your evidence in writing. If you want to go to a committee meeting, you can ask the relevant Chair. If we say to someone who wants to come to committee that we want their evidence in writing, we are setting a bit of a precedent there. If you want to go to any other committee meeting, you can ask the relevant Chair.

[110] **Eleanor Burnham:** I did not realise that.

[111] **Rosemary Butler:** You can ask to go to a committee meeting to speak, and the Chair can either say 'yes' or 'no'. I would not want us to say that we will have the evidence in writing.

[112] **Eleanor Burnham:** I was not suggesting that; I was just asking in what capacity she was coming.

[113] **Rosemary Butler:** You can take full advantage of that, Eleanor. The Economic Development and Transport Committee meets at the same time as our committee, if you would like to give evidence there.

[114] **Eleanor Burnham:** Thank you, Chair. I appreciate your support.

[115] **Rosemary Butler:** That is alright; I am glad that you appreciate it.

[116] The dates for the review are 8 March, 23 March, when we will be in Swansea, 5 April and 11 May. I hope that we can then bring our report on this review to Plenary this side of the summer holidays.

[117] **Eleanor Burnham:** Will you repeat those dates?

[118] **Rosemary Butler:** They were 8 March, 23 March, 5 April and 11 May, and we already have a Plenary date of 13 June. I would like to get this review done and dusted so that we can get into Plenary this side of the summer holidays.

[119] Thank you very much, Huw and Manon, for that overview; I am sure that we will be seeing you again. I look forward to this review as it has generated a lot of interest.

11.36 a.m.

Thursday, 16 February 2006

**Adolygiad o Bêl-droed
Football Review**

[194] **Rosemary Butler:** Welcome back. The next item is to agree the draft terms of reference for our football review. We had a discussion at the last meeting, and it was agreed that we would circulate the recommendations for the terms of reference. We have had a few positive comments back from people saying that they agreed with them. Are there any comments on those terms of reference?

[195] **Val Lloyd:** I am sorry that I have not replied before. In essence, I agree with the 16/02/2006

25

terms of reference. Should we consider taking evidence related to disability, race, ethnicity, homophobia, and so on? I know that the Zebra league is coming, but that is only one aspect. Is that implicit in our terms of reference, or do we need to include it in clearer terms?

[196] **Rosemary Butler:** It is implicit, because if you do that we are going to have to list a range of things. The Zebra league is coming, and we can raise the point on equality across the board with every club and everyone that comes.

[197] **Eleanor Burnham:** I was also going to ask about the disability and equality issue. Are we going to talk to any specific clubs—for instance, Wrexham Athletic Football Club, given its difficulties?

[198] **Rosemary Butler:** If you remember, last time we asked people to let us know who they wanted to include, and we gave you a comprehensive list of people who covered a range of sports. We were going to go to Wrexham, but there was no disability access there, so we are going to Swansea.

[199] **Eleanor Burnham:** I did not mean that. Will you be inviting Wrexham FC to comment on what we are doing, or how it sees the future of football generally, as well as on its difficulties? I know that it is a sensitive time and that the local authority is working hard to try to achieve a positive result for the club, and I know that the Minister has been supportive. The club is of great importance, and the ground is of huge, regional importance.

[200] **Rosemary Butler:** This issue was raised in great detail last time, if you remember. We are writing to everyone, and it will be on the website, and, hopefully in the press, that we are doing this review. Several of you have already had coverage in your local press about the review. If you want evidence from anyone in particular—whether we will have time to talk to everyone is a different issue—we can take written evidence from anyone and everyone.

[201] **Eleanor Burnham:** There are only three major football clubs in Wales, and I thought—

[202] **Rosemary Butler:** We had the list of who we would invite—the Zebra league was there. Sorry, Eleanor, carry on.

10.50 a.m.

[203] **Eleanor Burnham:** As we are going to Swansea and probably discussing Swansea City Football Club, would it be useful to specifically ask Cardiff City Football Club and Wrexham to make submissions?

[204] **Rosemary Butler:** That is up to the committee.

[205] **Eleanor Burnham:** I would not want Wrexham and Cardiff to feel that they were being ignored.

[206] **Rosemary Butler:** The Football Association of Wales is coming to talk to the committee.

[207] **Eleanor Burnham:** Okay, but as we are going to Swansea itself, I would not want Wrexham, particularly, as it is in north Wales—

[208] **Rosemary Butler:** And Cardiff. I will not have the north Wales issue, because we tried to go to north Wales.

16/02/2006

26

[209] **Eleanor Burnham:** I said Cardiff.

[210] **Rosemary Butler:** We really tried to go to Wrexham, so I do not want anyone to say that we are ignoring it.

[211] **Eleanor Burnham:** I would not dream of it. That is not the point that I am making.

[212] **Rosemary Butler:** Will you just suggest whom you wish to invite. We did ask Members to write after the last meeting so that we could provide a list today.

[213] **Eleanor Burnham:** I wish to invite Wrexham.

[214] **Lisa Francis:** I am sorry that I did not write in.

[215] **Rosemary Butler:** We ask Members to make suggestions before the meeting because it helps the flow of information.

[216] **Lisa Francis:** I appreciate that, and I apologise.

[217] **Rosemary Butler:** I know that you do normally write, and it would be helpful if everyone could do that in future.

[218] **Lisa Francis:** If there is not room to include it in the evidence-giving sessions, the Welsh office of the National Playing Fields Association could make a presentation or provide a written presentation. I think that that would be useful.

[219] **Rosemary Butler:** We did talk about that, and decided on a written presentation.

[220] **Lisa Francis:** So, it is included?

[221] **Rosemary Butler:** Yes. We have a huge list, which we discussed at the last meeting. I do not have it with me.

[222] **Lisa Francis:** The Welsh branch of the NPFA could make a useful contribution.

[223] **Rosemary Butler:** Are there any other suggestions? So, we are looking at Wrexham, Cardiff, and the National Playing Fields Association, although we said that we would ask the NPFA for a written presentation because it is not that long since it gave evidence to us. Are Members happy with that?

[224] **Owen John Thomas:** I am looking at the business of providing our observations.

[225] **Rosemary Butler:** Yes, you sent yours.

[226] **Owen John Thomas:** Did I?

[227] **Rosemary Butler:** Yes. Thank you very much.

[228] **Owen John Thomas:** Gosh. [*Laughter.*] I surprise myself.

[229] **Rosemary Butler:** You surprised me too, but you did send them, honestly.

[230] **Owen John Thomas:** They did not get lost in the long grass then?

[231] **Rosemary Butler:** No, we took them on board. You agreed with the terms of

16/02/2006

27

reference.

[232] So, it is suggested that we invite Cardiff, Wrexham and the National Playing Fields Association, although it is not long since it came to the committee. We will now have to find another slot for that, and a slot for an issue that we shall discuss later. I do not want this to go on until Christmas. Local authorities will be coming to committee. We have been through that, as you asked about that last time, Owen John.

[233] **Owen John Thomas:** Yes, I did, but I thought that we were going through this again.

[234] **Rosemary Butler:** No. We are not going through it again. That was the whole point of sending the observations in advance. We have the ones on the original list, and we are suggesting Cardiff and Wrexham. Whether they will be able to come to us or whether we just receive written evidence will be entirely up to the two clubs. We will also invite the National Playing Fields Association. When will our first evidence session be?

[235] **Ms Annand:** It depends whether we are going to see people on 8 March. If we are not, it will be in Swansea.

[236] **Rosemary Butler:** So, the first definite evidence-taking session will be in Swansea on 23 March. We may be able to slot some in for the next meeting.

[237] **Eleanor Burnham:** So, we will next meet on 8 March?

[238] **Rosemary Butler:** Yes.

[239] **Alun Pugh:** I have one issue with regard to the draft terms of reference, bearing in mind the Assembly's major financial contribution, not to football as a whole, but particularly to the FAW Trust with an emphasis on encouraging participation among young people. That is the public-finance angle on this. Would it make sense to make an explicit reference to young people in the terms of reference, because that is where our money goes?

[240] **Rosemary Butler:** That is why we want the FAW to come to the committee. Development of football is the *raison d'être* of the review. However, you are right, and we will take that on board. So, 8 March will be the first evidence session, although there may be a technical reason for our not being able to do that. Otherwise, it will be 23 March.
10.55 a.m.

Thursday, 23 March 2006

**Adolygu Pêl-droed yng Nghymru
Review of Football in Wales**

[209] **Rosemary Butler:** We will continue our review of football in Wales. As you know, this has proved to be very interesting to us so far. As a reminder, we started the first evidence session with an overview by the Sports Council for Wales, which was very informative for all Members. As we agreed earlier in the meeting, we are hoping to go to north Wales in June to carry on with it and to take in as many people in north Wales as we can.

[210] The written consultation will end in May, but Members were going to let us have any additional people whom they wished to add to the consultation list. If anyone has any members whom they want to add, please inform the Members' research service.

[211] To remind you of our terms of reference, it was a review of all aspects of football in Wales. We want to look at the future direction and priorities for the development of football in Wales; the effectiveness of the current structure supporting football in Wales, including whether it enables delivery for all and contributes to the Welsh Government's agenda, 'Climbing Higher'; the relationships between the Football Association of Wales as the governing body and the Football Association of Wales Trust as the development arm; and the funding and resources for football, which will be taking in local government particularly, because it puts in a huge amount of resource by way of pitches and facilities.

[212] This afternoon, I am very pleased that we have—or should have—someone from Swansea City Football Club. They have not arrived yet. From the Welsh Premier League, we have the secretary, John Deakin. We were going to have Huw Jenkins who, I understand, is in the building. I am assured that he is in the building somewhere.

2.40 p.m.

[213] We are pleased that Mr Deakin has come. I am sorry that you had to sit through the first half—we will not be that bad with you. I am sure that we will be calm and reflective after that. We thank you for the interesting paper that you sent. If you would like to give a brief introduction, the Members will then ask questions of you and you can also ask questions of us.

[214] **Mr Deakin:** I have been doing this job for the past 14 years, since the Welsh Premier League was started in 1992. Prior to that, I was in the Royal Air Force for 30 years and, believe me, keeping the Russians out was a lot easier than dealing with football matters.

[*Laughter.*]

[215] **Rosemary Butler:** It was good training, was it?

[216] **Mr Deakin:** Yes. I do not have a great deal to add to my paper. I want only to emphasise that, like most aspects of football in Wales, the Welsh Premier League is underresourced. I would not point the finger at the Football Association of Wales for that, because I believe that it has funded the league pretty satisfactorily from within its own resources over the past 14 years. It continues to be responsible for all administration of the league, and it gives an additional £100,000 a year, which is used to run the league and to subsidise the clubs.

[217] We started from a low base in 1992. When I went around the then 20 grounds to look at them, I wondered what I had taken on, to be quite honest. Through development funding, which came initially from the football trust, but predominantly from the clubs themselves, we have made a great deal of improvements to the infrastructure at grounds over the years. When 23/03/2006

22

I have had meetings with the Minister—and I make no apologies for the fact that I have gone to him looking for funding from the Welsh Assembly Government—he has always asked me how much the Football Association of Wales is putting in. The football association has put in the best part of £0.5 million over the last two years, which we continue to use to develop the

grounds.

[218] Our main problem is that we cannot play a lot of our European games on clubs' own grounds, but that situation is gradually being improved, and clubs such as Rhyl Football Club and Newtown Athletic Football Club are now able to do that. However, we have problems in south Wales. We are doing our best to address those because we are putting in new stands, using grant aid money, at Carmarthen Town FC and Port Talbot Town FC, and in south-

cummid Wales at Aberystwyth Town FC. Someone might ask, 'What about the north?'. We funded it this year based on the applications that we received from the clubs. There is no doubt about it, even now; the infrastructure in the south is probably of a higher standard than that in the north. Rhyl FC is a notable exception, as it has done an awful lot of work and has quite a nice ground now. However, Bangor City FC, which would probably be the other flagship club in north Wales, has a problem in the fact that the Farrar Road ground is falling down about its ears. The council has promised to relocate the club, because a supermarket is apparently going to build on Farrar Road, as it occupies a prime position within the city. So, we cannot invest in Farrar Road at the moment, but we will certainly be willing to invest in Bangor's new ground, hopefully, with other funding partners.

[219] The other main problem that the Welsh Premier League has suffered from is the proximity of the border; three Welsh clubs play in the English Football League. Now, I can fully understand why those clubs play in the English Football League: it has a standard that we cannot offer them. However, we get the argument that these clubs should be able to represent Wales in Europe. It would be my clubs' views, and my personal view, that you cannot have your cake and eat it. The Union of European Football Associations, UEFA, says that, to participate in Europe, you must participate in your own national league. Wales has its own national league and, for whatever reason—well, I know the reasons why they do not join it—I personally would resist, and my clubs would resist, any dilution of their representation in European competition at the expense of the Coca-Cola League clubs.

[220] **Rosemary Butler:** I am sorry, could you repeat that? What would you resist?

[221] **Mr Deakin:** We would resist any dilution of our representation. Normally, four places are filled by clubs that play in the Welsh domestic league. Certain politicians, including Assembly Members, have said that this is totally unfair. However, it would be totally unfair to my clubs, who are committed to Wales, to lose a place in European competition to clubs that choose to play across the border, and are not committed to Wales.

[222] I have one other point, and then I will finish—I can see you hovering there.

[223] **Rosemary Butler:** No, do not worry, there is plenty of time.

[224] **Mr Deakin:** Development was mentioned briefly beforehand. All our 18 clubs have youth development academies, and UEFA assists with the funding of them. It is a modest amount—£6,500 a year—but that must be used exclusively for developing young players. They all pour an awful lot of their own money into developing young players in their own communities, whether they are rural, such as Caersws, or urban communities, such as Rhyl. Our clubs provide a service to young people in their communities, and the health benefits are there for all to see. We have a partnership between the league and the FAW Trust in that it audits our academies for us; that is at a cost—we pay it for that. The results of those audits are dependent on whether they get funding or not. I am pleased to say that almost all of the clubs qualify for that funding every year, because they achieve the standards required.

23/03/2006

23

[225] **Rosemary Butler:** Do all the clubs get the £6,500?

[226] **Mr Deakin:** Absolutely.

[227] **Rosemary Butler:** Right. So do you apply for that money, or does each individual club apply for the money?

[228] **Mr Deakin:** We apply—it is allocated from UEFA, and it is called solidarity funding. It is as a result of participation in the Champions' League. It is paid in Swiss francs, and we get CHF.272,600.

[229] **Rosemary Butler:** It is in an unmarked account, is it? [*Laughter.*] Do not put that in

the minutes.

[230] **Mr Deakin:** If one of our clubs won the Champions' League, we would get CHF.9 million. So, the smaller nations are at a great disadvantage regarding funding. Wales is at a great disadvantage regarding funding for infrastructure projects, because of the situation with the Football Foundation. The Football Foundation in England does not fund Welsh clubs. I have an article here in where the foundation boasts that it has put in £27 million to its so-called non-league clubs over the years, but £2.7 million would do me a treat.

[231] **Rosemary Butler:** Can you let us have a copy of that?

[232] **Mr Deakin:** Yes, absolutely, that is not a problem. I also have a nice picture of a stand that it put in not too far away from the Welsh border at Kidderminster.

2.50 p.m.

[233] **Rosemary Butler:** Thank you for that. Who wants to ask the first question?

[234] **Laura Anne Jones:** The first point you made related to the problem of the three Welsh clubs going over to England to play. Clearly, they are going there because of a higher standard of play that we cannot match in Wales. However, that is no excuse. What are you doing to try to address the issue and drive up the standards in other Welsh clubs? Yes, football grounds are coming up to standard now, but how are you increasing the standard of play? How are you developing the youth strategy to ensure that we get more players coming through at a higher rate than we are now, because they are not coming through at the same rate as in England? Our youth are key to this. You have youth development strategies, but I would be interested to know how those are doing because you say that the amount of young people taking part in them is unsatisfactory. In the conclusion to your report, you state that attendance is far from satisfactory.

[235] **Mr Deakin:** I mean spectators when I talk about attendances; that is a major problem. In north-east Wales, football supporters only have to travel 30 minutes to see Liverpool, Everton and Manchester United. That causes us a great deal of difficulty. Unless we dig a ditch, we have a big problem there. However, we are keen to improve standards of play through clubs developing their own players, but it is also a fact of life that the best young players tend to go over the border to play.

[236] **Laura Anne Jones:** Why is that? We need to ask ourselves why. The money is there; how can we attract that money into Wales?

[237] **Mr Deakin:** I will give you an example: mum and dad see that little Jimmy has a lot of potential, so they sign him with Manchester United. He has earning potential and he will

23/03/2006

24

make them happy for the rest of their lives. There is no contest. We can never compete with England. What we must try to do is compete with nations of a similar size to Wales. We are beginning to do that. I am of the opinion that 18 clubs are too many; it is difficult to sustain 18 clubs in a nation the size of Wales. What is the population? You will know better than me.

[238] **Owen John Thomas:** Three million.

[239] **Mr Deakin:** All nations of similar sizes, and even larger ones, have smaller leagues. A counter-argument would be that the league covers all parts of Wales. However, it has been very difficult to get people through the gates. I think that we can do so by improving the standards of play, but the only way to do that is to increase resources.

[240] **Laura Anne Jones:** I understand that geographical issues get in the way, but it comes down to money, you are quite right. Manchester United gets incredible amounts of money, but it started off as a small club the same size as Cardiff City Football Club or Newport FC and then it grew. How can we attract that sort of sponsorship and those sorts of wealthy businessmen who provide that money into Wales? Are you working on anything to draw that money into Wales? I know that we have to drive up standards, but we need the money to do that.

[241] **Rosemary Butler:** If Mr Deakin could answer that, he would not be sitting here.

[242] **Mr Deakin:** I work night and day to bring sponsorship into the Welsh Premier League. Often the Welsh arm of a business will say, 'That looks pretty good'. So, you make a proposal, that proposal gets sent to London or elsewhere and the people there are not

interested. We have a sponsorship deal at the moment with Vauxhall Masterfit, which has been in place for the past two years. However, it is for a pretty modest amount. All aspects of the league are sponsored: the league, the league Cup, balls and referees. We are working on that all the time. The league has looked at appointing a commercial manager. I would have preferred to get a new starter who wanted to make a name for himself. I had a budget available for that.

[243] **Laura Anne Jones:** Do you think that the Welsh Assembly Government has a role to play in raising awareness?

[244] **Mr Deakin:** There might well be a role to play, yes, in raising awareness. We need all the help that we can get.

[245] **Rosemary Butler:** I think that we will be addressing that later; we need to have a question on that. The issue is that we do not have any corporate headquarters in Wales, so it is difficult get money for the arts, sport, buildings and so on. That is a major issue. It would be interesting if you could perhaps tell us a little about Malta, Cyprus and other countries that are about the same size as we are. Do they have the same difficulties as us?

[246] **Mr Deakin:** Our main problem is that Wales is a nation within the nation state of the United Kingdom. That is the major problem. The Republic of Ireland has a league of a similar standard and size to ours, but, as it is an independent nation, it has little problem in getting sponsorship from within the republic. A similar situation may be the case in places such as Cyprus.

[247] **Eleanor Burnham:** I am baffled by the whole complexity of who is who, where, how and what they do. Looking at the pyramid confuses me. I sympathise greatly with you. In the interim between my first and second careers, I did lots of work on raising funds and sponsorship—I know how difficult it is and I really sympathise with you. Look at Wrexham; an enormous amount of work has been done there to raise the standard of football in north23/03/2006

25

east Wales by developing wonderful youngsters who then go off to Manchester United, Liverpool Football Club and so on. You are in a really difficult position and I am not going to strike at that at all.

[248] My question is probably quite simple. Is it possible to simplify what is going on in football in Wales? The difficulty is that you need the top tier, but you also need the youth and community aspects, and that is what I wrote about when I first dipped my toe into the waters of this issue and made some possibly foolish suggestions, which I was harangued about. The relationship between you and the Union of European Football Associations is obviously strong, but what about your relationship with the FAW? Is there any way of getting more money out of the FAW? I may be asking a question that you cannot answer.

[249] **Rosemary Butler:** You should keep that question for when the FAW comes to committee.

[250] **Mr Deakin:** I will take the fifth on that. I am an employee of the FAW, but I would say that I think that it generally does a reasonable job.

[251] **Eleanor Burnham:** However, one of your first priorities is to improve the quality of the ground, for instance, at Bangor City because that will never get anywhere unless it receives more investment. However, you seem to think that that will come about when the club moves from Farrar Road. So, you are quite happy about that?

[252] **Mr Deakin:** I am happy that it will move from Farrar Road, although it is a ground with some tradition. However, it is in the city centre, parking is difficult and it would be nice for Bangor City to have a new ground. It would be our aim for the ground to be of a standard that would enable the club to play its European games at its own ground, and for the FAW to use the facility for under-21, under-19, under-16 and women's matches. Women's football is very important.

[253] **Eleanor Burnham:** I want to ask you about that. What is your hope for developing women in football?

3.00 p.m.

[254] **Mr Deakin:** When I started in this job in 1992, Wales had a very poor women's

team. That has gradually developed and now they are playing at a reasonable standard. We have players like Jane Ludlow who plays for Arsenal Ladies, and so on. They do not do too badly; they have improved somewhat. Coming back to your point about development, it is important that we get more girls playing the game. In mid Wales, Caersws, Newtown and Welshpool all have women's and girls' teams. We even have a couple of reasonable women referees in Wales. There is a major problem in terms of women referees. It is a tragedy that Wales does not have a woman referee on the international list. There are tremendous opportunities for women in refereeing.

[255] I go to the United States a lot because my son was daft enough to marry an American—[*Laughter.*]

[256] **Rosemary Butler:** That will be in the minutes so you had better be careful.

[257] **Mr Deakin:** He would probably agree with me.

[258] **Rosemary Butler:** You are digging a hole, so you had better stop there.

[259] **Mr Deakin:** I go to California to see my grandsons and I walk to the equivalent of
23/03/2006

26

our local park and see hundreds of young boys and girls playing what they call soccer. Look at the American women's team: it is among the best in the world and, because of the development situation that they have in the United States—and they have a lot more people than we have—their national team is very highly rated in Fédération Internationale de Football Association rankings. It is important that we get that participation by young people.

[260] **Val Lloyd:** I apologise for my delay, which was longer than I expected it to be. Mr Deakin, I apologise, but I was not here for the whole of your presentation. I have read your written report with a great deal of interest. I have two questions. I notice that, in your paper, you made two references to politicians. It would be true to say that both were less than complimentary—that is being polite about it. What do you see as the role of politicians in football in Wales?

[261] I was very interested in your comment on refereeing. I have heard some comments generally, and I would like your verification or otherwise on this, that there is a difficulty in attracting people, not just women, to refereeing in Wales. Is that true in your experience? If so, what has caused it and what can we do to put it right?

[262] **Mr Deakin:** I will take the refereeing point first. I was a referee for an awfully long time. For 26 years, I refereed right from local parks to what was then the Football League first division. When I started back in 1966, it was a lot easier than it is now to go out onto the local park as a newly qualified referee and cope, as such. There certainly was not so much of a challenge to authority as is currently the case in society as a whole. Our major problem in Wales is primarily in recruiting and saying, 'It might be a good idea for you to have a go at this' and getting people to go on courses. An even more difficult problem is retention, because they go out to the sharp end and say, 'Goodness me, what is going here? Why should I be called these sorts of names? Why should I be challenged and confronted like this?'. Fortunately, Wales does not have a big violence problem vis-à-vis referees, as some other parts of the United Kingdom do, but we occasionally have assaults on referees. Once a referee is assaulted, you have lost him because he is not going to out again to get a smack in the mouth, or whatever. It is a very difficult situation.

[263] We have a national referees' officer who is responsible for recruitment and we have a keen group of volunteers who are prepared to give up time to run courses in the evenings to teach people to referee. However, it is difficult. We do run recruiting drives; we identify our international referees and say, 'Look at Ceri Richards. He was refereeing in the UEFA Cup championship last week. Would you not like to do that?'. We are even using a girl called Chloe Lloyd from Welshpool who is one of our promising women referees. We are producing literature, advertising and doing our best to do it that way.

[264] Here is one thing that has an effect on refereeing in Wales. When I was refereeing, if I lived in Wales I could progress into the English league which was a big carrot, believe you me; it is a big carrot now, because they are getting more than £60,000 a year, which is an incentive in itself. We do not have that incentive for Welsh referees now. Once again, I am

going to turn the argument on myself: if we have three clubs playing in the English league, why do we not have three referees in the English league to give them more refereeing experience at a higher level of football and also to have more international representation? I am sorry madam Chair, I will finish now—

[265] **Rosemary Butler:** No; I just want to know why they can no longer get refereeing work in England.

[266] **Mr Deakin:** When the then League of Wales was formed, the English league said, 'You have your own national league'. They kept those people who were on the lists at that time, but, once they had retired, they would not replace them. We now have one person left—

23/03/2006

27
a chap called Ceri Richards—who is an assistant referee, or a linesman, in the English Premier League. He went on to the English national list in 1991, during my last season—he did his first game running the line for me at Shrewsbury Town Football Club, but that is beside the point. However, he has been able to stay on. Ceri Richards is also our number 1 referee. He referees in the Welsh Premier League, he is on the FIFA list, and referees international matches but he can only run the line in England.

[267] **Rosemary Butler:** Perhaps we can have some more information on that from you, so that we can pursue that issue.

[268] **Val Lloyd:** My second point—

[269] **Mr Deakin:** On the second point, I did not mean to be disparaging about politicians at all. I have had two meetings with the Minister and I am well aware that funds are limited. Those meetings have not brought me any personal satisfaction, and certainly have not resulted in any funding. The question has been, 'How much is the FAW putting in?'. Now you know that there has been £0.5 million over the past two years. I am not sure about naming names but Eleanor Burnham came out, as you did, about the Wrexham situation which I personally found unhelpful. People sitting in Switzerland must think, 'What on earth is going on over there?'. If I knew of a way of getting Wrexham, Cardiff and Swansea back into European competitions, first, without disadvantaging my own clubs and also within the current UEFA rules, I would do it because I have an excellent relationship with those three clubs.

3.10 p.m.

[270] **Rosemary Butler:** I think that that is something that we will be looking at later on, to see whether there is anything that can be done. I know that you have done everything that you can at a professional level. However, it might be that politicians could be useful in that we could recommend it to the Assembly, the Assembly could accept it and then it might move on from there. However, we would not do anything without having everyone's agreement, and having spoken to other people in football who will be coming to give evidence. If there is anything that we can do that will be the one thing that everybody would want, we will do it, not to disadvantage your clubs, but to get the advantage of being in Europe. We will be very careful on that.

[271] **Eleanor Burnham:** As I have been mentioned, I just want to—

[272] **Rosemary Butler:** Denise is next.

[273] **Eleanor Burnham:** It was not a negative point; I was just trying to raise awareness—

[274] **Rosemary Butler:** Eleanor, please. Denise is next and you can come back in later.

[275] **Denise Idris Jones:** We have produced some excellent footballers in Wales, considering it is such a small country. We can name Mark Hughes, Robbie Savage, and Michael Owen.

[276] **Rosemary Butler:** She taught them all. [*Laughter.*]

[277] **Denise Idris Jones:** I taught some of them.

[278] **Mr Deakin:** Yes, we produced Michael Owen, but he plays for England.

[279] **Denise Idris Jones:** That was his decision, as he was born in Chester.

23/03/2006

28

[280] **Mr Deakin:** Absolutely.

[281] **Denise Idris Jones:** We also produced Ryan Giggs. They became particularly good

at their game because they went through schools of excellence, I believe. There is a school of excellence in Gresford, near Wrexham, which has been there for a long time. Are we sure that that will continue? Not so long ago, I spoke to the man who had been Michael Owen's headmaster and he said that had seen that the boy had great potential, but when they visited the FAW, they received very little help for Michael. Can you answer that?

[282] **Mr Deakin:** I am not representing the FAW, but I feel comfortable answering the question. I think that the FAW has moved on from that time because of the FAW Trust. The trust has done wonderful work in the local authorities, and with the schools, on the development of young players. I think that we have moved forward on that particular point. I will just pick up the point regarding Michael Owen, because another potential problem is the English pillaging our best young players. They are always looking for the young people who are doing well in Wales, asking 'Have you got an English grandmother or something like that?' Those questions are being asked all the time and that does not help us at all.

[283] **Rosemary Butler:** It works both ways. We have players from Australia with Welsh grandmothers.

[284] **Denise Idris Jones:** May I follow on from that? If you look at page 2 and the club licensing that you mentioned, have some licensing requirements been more difficult to fulfil than others? Are some more prohibitive than others?

[285] **Mr Deakin:** The requirement in relation to financial criteria has been particularly difficult for clubs to achieve. National law requires a certain standard of auditing for companies with a turnover of up to £5.6 million, but UEFA will not accept that level of auditing. It insists on having fully audited accounts, as required of an incorporated company. We have been back to UEFA on numerous occasions to try to get that rescinded for Wales, but it has not been done. Club finances are far better administered now as a result of club licensing. I have a guy who works for me called Andrew Howard, who is the FAW licensing officer, and he spends an awful lot of time assisting the clubs in getting a licence. We have been in the fortunate position that none of the clubs that have qualified for Europe through their sporting achievements have been prohibited from participating in the competition through not being granted a licence. They have all made the effort and the investment to achieve the licence.

[286] I have a brief supplementary point. Some of the clubs, that is, those that have not qualified for European competition, have not made a great deal of effort. Therefore, we went to the FAW and said that we need to introduce a domestic licence. So, clubs need a domestic licence to play in the Welsh Premier League, albeit on the basis of slightly different criteria than the European criteria. That domestic licence will be introduced from season 2007-08 onwards.

[287] **Rosemary Butler:** It might be interesting if we could see the different criteria when they have been decided.

[288] **Mr Deakin:** I would be pleased to furnish the committee with a club licensing manual, so that you can see exactly—

[289] **Rosemary Butler:** How thick is it?

[290] **Mr Deakin:** Not as thick as some of your documents. [*Laughter.*]

23/03/2006

29

[291] **Rosemary Butler:** Fair enough. Good answer.

[292] **Mr Deakin:** It is quite a comprehensive document. The current document will be superseded in a couple of years' time, and it has been simplified by UEFA in agreement with all 52 national associations, so there will be a more streamlined document from season 2009-10 onwards, or maybe a season earlier.

[293] **Rosemary Butler:** Fine, that will be useful. Are you finished, Denise?

[294] **Denise Idris Jones:** Yes.

[295] **Lisa Francis:** I am afraid that I was not here for the earlier part of your presentation. I am interested in a comment on page 2 of your report, where you say that

[296] 'The most negative aspect of the demise of the Football Trust was the cessation of funding of the league from that source, the Football Foundation which succeeded the Trust

does not include Wales in its funding programme.’

[297] Why is that?

[298] **Mr Deakin:** Basically, the Football Foundation is funded by the FA Premier League in England, but an awful lot of public money also goes into it from central Government. I have never received a satisfactory explanation as to why Wales is not included. Fortunately enough, I have a meeting with it on Monday so I will ask the question again. It puts Wales at a tremendous disadvantage, given the fact that six figure sums regularly go into clubs of equivalent size and lesser status than the Welsh Premier League clubs. They are clubs which are in the Northern Premier League and Southern League, and the lower reaches of the Conference League—you are talking about tiers 6 and 7 of the English pyramid regularly accessing six figure sums.

[299] **Lisa Francis:** That is obviously a huge disadvantage for us in Wales. When you say that public money goes in from England, do you mean Government money?

[300] **Mr Deakin:** Yes.

[301] **Rosemary Butler:** Via the sports council.

[302] **Mr Deakin:** Yes.

[303] **Lisa Francis:** And you say that the Minister is aware of this?

[304] **Mr Deakin:** He most certainly is.

[305] **Lisa Francis:** In an ideal world, and perhaps that this is an unfair question to ask in many ways, how would you like to see football funded in Wales? I know that that has perhaps given you enough rope.

[306] **Mr Deakin:** If you are to attract public money into football or any sport, you must give something in return. Provided that we could improve the development of young players and greater community involvement, I do not think that it is unreasonable to expect public money to go into football, or any other sport for that matter. In terms of other ways of funding, the clubs are very innovative in raising sponsorship—they are probably better at it than I am—because there is an awful lot of local support for clubs. The governing body has a responsibility to fund football at all levels.

23/03/2006

30

3.20 p.m.

[307] However, like any company, they have to work within their own resources. The FAW has done a pretty good job as far as the Welsh Premier League is concerned. I would not want to comment on further down the pyramid and into the grass roots. However, it also puts money into the FAW Trust, which has already said that it does an excellent job. The clubs have a responsibility to generate their own funding, but it is not unreasonable for the governing body, sponsorship and public funding to contribute to the overall pot.

[308] **Lisa Francis:** I have a further question.

[309] **Rosemary Butler:** One more then, because Owen John wants to come in.

[310] **Lisa Francis:** Thank you. You mentioned your experience in California. How popular is football over there, or ‘soccer’, as they call it? It sounds as though it is as popular as sport is in general in Australia, and it would be cheap of me to say that it is just because the climate is conducive to that. However, is it because funding is better, and how do the Americans fund their football? I am very ignorant about these things, so I do not know.

[311] **Mr Deakin:** I am not sure how the Americans fund it. At a local level, in the area with which I am familiar, they are so rich, that it is not a problem to fund and develop these things. Also, in America, it is much easier to get corporate sponsorship of any sport, locally and nationally.

[312] **Lisa Francis:** I appreciate your comments about sponsorship, because attracting the bigger sponsors has always been a problem in Wales, because of our geography, really.

[313] **Rosemary Butler:** We will get information on funding from other places.

[314] **Owen John Thomas:** Mae’n flin
gennyf fy mod wedi colli dechrau eich
cyfraniad, pan oeddech yn siarad ac yn ateb
cwestiynau.

Owen John Thomas: I apologise for missing the start of your contribution, when you were addressing committee and answering questions.

[315] Ar feysydd chwarae y clybiau sydd yn y gynghrair Gymreig, megis Barry Town—a yw dal yn y gynghrair?

On the grounds of the clubs in the Welsh league, such as Barry Town—is it still in the league?

[316] **Mr Deakin:** No.

[317] **Owen John Thomas:** Sawl clwb yng Nghymru sy'n meddu ar feysydd sydd yn cyrraedd y safon ryngwladol a dderbynnir gan UEFA, ar wahân i Wrecsam, Caerdydd ac Abertawe?

Owen John Thomas: How many clubs in Wales have grounds that meet the international standard accepted by UEFA, apart from Wrexham, Cardiff and Swansea?

[318] **Mr Deakin:** The standards required for the preliminary stages of UEFA competition are somewhat different from those at the later stages, namely competition proper of the UEFA Cup beyond the preliminary rounds, and the UEFA Champions' League group stages. It would be utopia if we had a Welsh club in there. However, the grounds that qualify are Rhyl, Newtown, Cwmbran town, because of the sports stadium there, the ground in Cardiff Leckwith Stadium—

[319] **Owen John Thomas:** Pwy sy'n chwarae yn y fan honno?

Owen John Thomas: Who plays there?

23/03/2006

31

[320] **Mr Deakin:** The team that is currently bottom of our league—Grange Harlequins. We would hope, within the next year, to have additional ones, at Carmarthen, Port Talbot and Aberystwyth. We have a ground at Barry, namely Jenner Park, which is no longer used by Barry Town; Barry Town is no longer in the Welsh Premier League because it was relegated. However, Jenner Park does meet UEFA standards because, some years ago, we accessed FAW Trust money and around £170,000 was invested in upgrading the dressing rooms and installing a new stand to provide additional seating and floodlights.

[321] **Owen John Thomas:** Ar wahân i'r Barri sydd wedi methu, fel petai, a yw'r ffaith bod y clybiau fel y Rhyl, y Drenewydd a Chwmbrân ac ati yn chwarae ar feysydd o safon dda wedi codi nifer y bobl sy'n mynychu gemau pêl-droed a chodi safon y chwarae?

Owen John Thomas: Apart from Barry, which has failed, as it were, has the fact that clubs such as Rhyl, Newtown, Cwmbran and so on play on grounds of good quality increased the number of people attending football games and improved the standard of play?

[322] **Mr Deakin:** It is a mixed message. Rhyl, in particular, is one of our better-supported clubs. It attracts reasonable gates by our standards. Cwmbran is very poorly supported. Newtown can get reasonable support, but, once again, it is not doing too well; it is in the

bottom half and its support is pretty fickle, to say the least. I am pretty confident about places like Carmarthen and Aberystwyth. Better infrastructure will probably increase their already reasonable support. Aberystwyth is probably one of our best-supported clubs.

[323] **Owen John Thomas:** A oes cysylltiadau rhwng Cymdeithas Bêl-droed Cymru a chlybiau fel Merthyr Tydfil, Casnewydd ac eraill sy'n chwarae yng nghynghreiriau bychain Lloegr?

Owen John Thomas: Are there links between the Football Association of Wales and clubs such as Merthyr Tydfil, Newport and others that play in the smaller leagues in England?

[324] **Mr Deakin:** No, not really. One of those clubs plays in the FAW Premier Cup, which is another competition, sponsored by the BBC, or the prize money is provided by the BBC. Floodlit games are shown throughout the season. That competition also involves Cardiff, Swansea and Wrexham. However, there is no real link. They were originally known as the exiles. I am sure that you will recall the situation in the early 1990s when the FAW forced them to play outside Wales. There were five of them at that time, but two have returned, namely Caernarfon Town and Barry Town. I can understand why the clubs in the Coca-Cola League persist in playing in England, but, when it comes to Colwyn Bay, Newport and Merthyr Tydfil, it is incomprehensible why they do it. It would be much more advantageous to them to play in our league; it is all down to dogma.

[325] **Owen John Thomas:** Mae mwy o dimau pêl-droed yng Nghymru na thimau rygbi er bod rygbi'n cael mwy o sylw. Fodd bynnag, mae gan y timau rygbi glybiau yfed a chymdeithasu sy'n gysylltiedig â'r gêm, ac mae hynny'n tueddu creu rhyw fath o gefnogaeth. Pam nad yw hynny'n digwydd i'r un graddau gyda phêl-droed?

Owen John Thomas: There are more football teams in Wales than rugby teams, even though rugby gets more attention. However, the rugby teams have drinking and social clubs that are linked to the game, and that tends to create some sort of support. Why does that not happen to the same extent with football?

[326] **Mr Deakin:** Around 50 per cent of our clubs have social clubs—

[327] **Owen John Thomas:** A ydych yn sôn am dimau yn y gynghrair Gymreig neu dimau bychain?

Owen John Thomas: Are you talking about teams in the Welsh league or smaller teams?

23/03/2006

32

[328] **Mr Deakin:** Teams in the Welsh Premier League—

[329] **Owen John Thomas:** Mae gan dimau rygbi glybiau cymdeithasu bach iawn.

Owen John Thomas: Rugby teams have very small social clubs.

3.30 p.m.

[330] **Mr Deakin:** Many of the grass-roots clubs play in local parks and they just do not have the backing to support the type of clubs that you find in rugby. Perhaps that there is not

the same kind of drinking culture. [*Laughter.*]

[331] **Rosemary Butler:** No, but those clubs behave well.

[332] Does anyone have anything else to ask? I see that no-one does. It has been a very interesting presentation, thank you very much. On the cost of upgrading the grounds, you talked about the improvement costs for the European standards. How much are you talking about, as a ballpark figure, or is every club that different?

[333] **Mr Deakin:** Yes, it is a different situation at most clubs. We are making progress, but we currently have an exception from UEFA stating that our grounds only need 1,000 seats. The UEFA criterion without the exception is 3,000 seats. The medium-term objective would be to put a ground in north, mid and south Wales with 3,000 seats and the other ancillary requirements—good dressing rooms, drug testing rooms, first aid rooms and the necessary security aspects. Putting a figure on it is very difficult. I could produce a figure, but—

[334] **Rosemary Butler:** If it is not too much work, that might be very helpful.

[335] **Mr Deakin:** Not at all. I will produce that.

[336] **Rosemary Butler:** You also said that most clubs have youth development policies or sections. What about development policies or sections for women? Are clubs encouraged to do that?

[337] **Mr Deakin:** Yes, they are encouraged to do it, although not all of them are doing it. Clubs such as Newtown FC have a good women's section, as does Total Network Solutions FC. We will probably put in the domestic licence the requirement for clubs to have a girls team at a particular age level, probably under 17.

[338] **Rosemary Butler:** You will have to take positive action at the beginning to encourage people to come forward.

[339] Are there any more questions? I see that there are not. Thank you, Mr Deakin. We have asked you a lot of questions and I am sure that there is a question that you would like to ask us, but the answer is that we do not have any money. [*Laughter.*] This session has been most helpful, and we will no doubt see you in north Wales when we go on our rounds there.

[340] **Mr Deakin:** It has been my pleasure.

[341] **Rosemary Butler:** Information for the committee is that Huw Jenkins from Swansea City FC has not been able to come because he has been called away to another meeting. So, we do not have any evidence from him, but he will be providing a written paper.

[342] That is the end of our agenda for today. We will rearrange the agenda for the next meeting to ensure that we have the Minister's report then.

23/03/2006

33

Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 3.33 p.m.

The meeting ended at 3.33 p.m.

Doc33

Wednesday, 5 April 2006

Adolygiad o Bêl-droed yng Nghymru Review of Football in Wales

[69] **Rosemary Butler:** Good morning, gentlemen. Welcome to the Culture, Welsh Language and Sport Committee. In case you have not been before, I inform you that we have simultaneous translation facilities should you need them—you switch the headsets on, and that is it; I think that the translation is on channel 1.

[70] I welcome Neil Ward and Phil Pritchard from the Football Association of Wales Trust. I say that somewhat hesitantly because I am not sure whether that is still your title or whether you are about to change it. If you would like to give us a presentation, and then Members will ask you questions, which I am sure will be not too difficult.

[71] **Mr Ward:** Thank you, Chair. First, I pass on the apologies of my chairman of the board of trustees, Mr Peter Lee, who, unfortunately, cannot be with us today. However, he very much welcomes the opportunity for the trust to come this morning and make a presentation. I also introduce Mr Phil Pritchard, who is a director and trustee of the FAW Trust, and also a senior member of the Football Association of Wales.

[72] I am here to look at the areas of responsibility of the FAW Trust, and the work of the trust. I do not really wish to stray into areas of work or responsibility that pertain to the Football Association of Wales, so if—

[73] **Rosemary Butler:** Are you employed by the Football Association of Wales?

[74] **Mr Ward:** By the FAW Football in the Community Ltd.

[75] **Rosemary Butler:** Okay. We are only interested in the trust this morning.

[76] **Mr Ward:** We would also like to focus on the work of the trust.

[77] I distributed a paper in advance of this meeting, which, hopefully, Members have had a chance to read. The purpose is to highlight the trust's success since the conclusion of the Welsh Assembly Government football forum in 2002, and explain how we have revised our strategy to meet the key objectives of 'Climbing Higher', and also to demonstrate how football can meet the new social and health agendas that 'Climbing Higher' seeks to address.

[78] I refer Members to paragraph 6 of the paper. We feel that football is a powerful tool for participation, community health, and social inclusion initiatives. It is very much a mass culture, it enjoys a high media profile, and it is a motivating hook for young people. We are going to seek, within our revised strategy, to build on this and to continue to promote active participation through curricular and extra-curricular provision in schools, and to continue to build on the good work that we have already done with clubs to build junior club membership and participation, with a continued focus on girls. Later, I will report on some of the significant successes that we have had with girls' participation. I will also explain how we are going to develop other partnerships with community groups and look to tackle areas where there is perhaps limited participation, particularly among black and ethnic minority communities and disability groups.

[79] We will continue to mainstream the Welsh language within our programme delivery. We have already linked well with the Urdd; we have trained some of its staff to deliver our coaching resources and training through the medium of Welsh and have produced resources and materials through the Welsh language. We will continue to identify new volunteers and look to upskill and train our existing volunteer workforce through our training initiatives. We will draw on initiatives, particularly the internet, to assist those who want to access our training programmes through other media, thereby using more interactive methods of programme delivery, and to assist them in their learning and understanding and coaching activities.

[80] We are going to continue to build on the successes that we have had at junior level in terms of identifying and developing talented players, and support the future success of national teams. We will try to help Wales to sustain—as has been identified in 'Climbing Higher'—a top-24 world ranking. We can look to models from countries such as Croatia, Norway and Denmark, which have similar population levels, to continue to have success at that level. That is our target and aim for the future, and that applies to girls and boys.

[81] In the strategy, we set ourselves what we think are quite challenging targets. We are looking to continue the incremental growth of boys' participation. We have set some real challenging targets for girls' participation. We have seen a 300 per cent growth in the last three years and there are now some 3,000 girls registered as players and, by 2010, we are looking for a 400 per cent growth rate to establish somewhere in the region of 10,000 girls participating. In order to do that, we obviously have to increase the number of coaches, volunteers and new teams that girls can play in. We are thinking of establishing 450 new girls' teams, which would be a 50 per cent growth.

[82] We have already established a national co-ordinator post for disability football, and some good groundwork has been established. As a result, we are looking to develop 60 new teams and six competition structures for disabled players in future. I mentioned earlier the need to train more volunteers and coaches, and we are going to build on that and develop 4,000 training opportunities and continue our good work in identifying and developing talented young players. You will see, under point 3, that we feel that we have established a conveyor belt for junior players to come through the system and that the girls' under-19 team is now ranked in the top 10 in Europe, which is obviously a significant achievement. The majority of its players in the last two years have come through the trust structures. We will build on the continuing success of the work that Brian Flynn has done at the under-17 and under-19 levels with the intermediate group squads and make sure that there is a production line of quality future international players.

[83] I will now move on to report on some of the successes that we have had in the last three years. I will start at the higher level and work down. I am pleased to report that, last year, the under-16 national development squad was a joint winner of the Victory Shield. Unfortunately, that was only the third time in the last 40 years that the squad managed to secure that, but that again shows you the quality of the work that is going on at that level, and it still remains a significant achievement, bearing in mind the huge participation base that England, in particular, has to draw on. I would also allude to junior players such as Joe Ledley, Craig Davies and Lewin Nyatanga, who have now made the senior national squad, progressing from the national development squad over the last three or four years. That highlights the production line that I referred to, with young quality players coming through and working their way into the senior national football team

9.50 a.m.

[84] There is no doubt that Wales has a world-class coach education programme, and that is recognised by UEFA. We were one of the first 16 nations to achieve recognition under the UEFA Jira convention on the mutual recognition of coaching qualifications across Europe. Last year, we were one of the first five nations to achieve revalidation, so that shows you the quality of products that we have to offer in Wales, particularly for our coaches, who are vital to producing the players that I have already alluded to.

[85] We have made incremental progress, with boys' participation increasing to in excess of 38,000 registered players. The principal success, which is pleasing to report, is the rapid increase in girls' participation, where we have seen over 300 per cent growth and 3,000 new girls playing, with 50 new competition and league structures being established for the 338 new girls' teams that have been put together.

[86] In terms of our work with schools, we have a schools accreditation scheme that looks at increasing active participation, providing curricular and extra-curricular activity, supporting the training of teachers and delivering football within the curriculum and after school. We have seen 638 schools register for that scheme, and 440 schools have achieved the benchmark criteria. It has been one of the key catalysts for the growth in girls' participation.

[87] Our work with clubs continues. Four hundred and seventy clubs have registered on our club accreditation scheme, which is a quality-led benchmark programme that tries to assist clubs to build the capacity to ensure that coaches are trained and that relevant equipment is available for teams to use. The programme also tries to provide more equitable opportunities, so we are looking to establish more girls' teams within the mainstream club structure.

[88] It would be remiss of me not to mention the support that we have had from within the football structure, particularly within the volunteer base and the work of schools and clubs in helping us to achieve what we have achieved. I should also mention the increasing and improving relationship between ourselves and the Football Association of Wales, which will stand us in good stead in the future. I thank the Minister for his keen interest and support in the work that we have undertaken. I welcomed his attendance at the events that we have held over the past couple of years. I also acknowledge Phil Carling and Huw Jones from the Sports Council for Wales, who provide a great deal of support to the trust, both financially and in terms of guidance in what we are trying to achieve.

[89] I refer Members to the back of the paper. I have tried to highlight a number of examples where football has begun to contribute to the broader aims of 'Climbing Higher', particularly in terms of health and social inclusion. I have already mentioned a number of key activities in relation to active participation and junior club membership, but if you look towards the end of the first page of the appendix, you will see an explanation of the work that we are doing with Cardiff council on a pilot project to engage more BME communities in football and provide opportunities for them to participate, based on their needs and wants. You will also see a programme developed by the Rhyl and district junior league, which focuses on building respect and standards of behaviour. That is a key need in society, where standards are perhaps not what they were. That is an example of how football is trying to promote those types of initiatives. We have been involved in developing with the Royal National Institute for the Blind a project for visually impaired participants, so that they can participate on a regular basis and begin to play against other teams, resulting from the work that we are doing in

other areas.

[90] Through our work with the schools programme and the coach education programme, we have trained a number of police officers from South Wales Police. They have been involved in the community coaching programme, and the very fact that they have been able to work with children in the local community has led to a reported significant decrease in petty crime, particularly vandalism. This shows, again, that it is a very worthwhile project.

[91] I explained about technology earlier and how that can be utilised. Football is a motivating hook for young people. I am aware of one resource, namely the Cambrian Village Trust in the Rhondda, where key skills based around football are used, and this interests the children to develop their curriculum needs at the same time. I have mentioned our work in the Welsh language and our continued focus on that.

[92] To summarise, you will, hopefully, recognise the progress that we have made, the huge achievements over the past three years and the renewed focus that we will have in the years to come. Before I conclude, I would like to highlight some key challenges for us. First, key to future success will be long-term, assured funding in order to sustain our operation and build on the success of the work that we have achieved, and in order to avoid a rather hand-to-mouth existence, which may have been the case in the past. We welcome the innovation and new initiatives within 'Climbing Higher' and we will certainly build on those. Key to that is the need for a joined-up approach between the different funding agencies within the key areas that can support the needs of sport, and football in particular, between the health and education sectors. So, they need to understand how sport can contribute and reduce the complexity for bodies such as ours to access their support and funding. That is crucial.

[93] On participation, one of the key inhibitors to participation, particularly on the girls side, is access to facilities, grass pitches in particular. In certain key areas, such as Gwent, sufficient pitches are not available and they tend to get overused, therefore, girls who may have a secondary option to play on the weekend do not get to play because the pitches are unplayable. So, I will leave that as an open point for you to consider.

[94] As I said, we are trying to identify and train new volunteers and upskilling the existing volunteer workforce. We are very much involved in the UKCC project and devising our qualifications to meet the national qualifications framework. We are trying to identify colleges in the 16 to 19-year-old age group. They have reported funding levels as being capped and, therefore, if we were to deliver those qualifications to them, they might not be in a position to work with us.

[95] I think that I have highlighted a couple of challenges, which I would like the committee to consider at some point. That concludes my address.

[96] **Rosemary Butler:** Thank you. Do you have any comments to make, Mr Pritchard?

[97] **Mr Pritchard:** I have nothing to add, Chair.

[98] **Rosemary Butler:** That was a very full and comprehensive report. The written paper was excellent and you have highlighted some additional points, on which I am sure the Members will ask you questions.

[99] **Owen John Thomas:** Mae hwn

[100] **Owen John Thomas:** This is a

yn bapur adeiladol iawn sy'n cynnwys nifer o enghreifftiau o dwf a dyheadau uchelgeisiol. Yr ydych yn helpu pobl gyda'u timau ac yn y blaen, felly a yw hyn yn ymateb i'w gofynion nhw yn bennaf? A ydych chi'n gwneud unrhyw beth rhagweithiol, er enghraifft, mynd allan i'r gymdeithas ac annog pobl ifanc i ddechrau eu timau eu hunain, fel eu bod yn gwneud rhywbeth egniol ac yn teimlo bod pwrpas i'w bywydau ac yn y blaen? Mae'n amlwg bod chwaraeon, mewn ardaloedd difreintiedig yn arbennig, yn helpu pobl i fagu ymdeimlad o bwrpas ac o fod yn rhan o gymdeithas. Felly, pa ganran o'ch gwaith sy'n rhagweithiol, o ran mynd allan a chychwyn prosiectau?

very constructive paper that includes many examples of growth and ambitious aspirations. Given that you assist people with their teams and so on, does this come mainly in response to their demands? Do you do anything proactive such as going out to communities and encouraging young people to start their own teams, so that they do something energetic and feel that there is a purpose to their lives and so on? It is clear that sport can play a very important role, particularly in disadvantaged areas, in helping to instil in people a sense of purpose and a feeling of being part of society. So, what percentage of your work is proactive, involving your going out to initiate projects?

10.00 a.m.

[101] Ar y pwynt am yr iaith, mae'n dda eich bod yn cydweithio ag Urdd Gobaith Cymru fel bod pobl ifanc yn cael y cyfle i ddefnyddio'r iaith y tu allan i'r dosbarth. Fodd bynnag, yn anffodus, cefais lythyr yr wythnos hon gan rywun o'r enw Mr Pritchard—ac nid y Mr Pritchard sydd yma. Yr oedd wedi ceisio defnyddio'r iaith wrth ysgrifennu at y bobl sy'n eich cyflogi, yn anuniongyrchol efallai, sef Cymdeithas Bêl-droed Cymru. Gwrthododd y gymdeithas ateb Mr Pritchard, sy'n dod o Gaernarfon, am ei fod wedi ysgrifennu yn Gymraeg. Dywedwyd gan y gymdeithas nad oedd bwriad ganddi i weithredu drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg—ar lafar neu yn ysgrifenedig. Onid yw hynny'n gwrthdaro â'ch polisi chi o gefnogi pobl yn yr Urdd i ddefnyddio'r iaith? Beth yw eich ymateb i'r sylwadau hynny?

On the point regarding the language, it is good that you work with Urdd Gobaith Cymru so that young people have opportunities to use the language outside the classroom. Unfortunately however, I received a letter this week from a Mr Pritchard—though not the same Mr Pritchard as is here today. He had tried to use the language when writing to the people who employ you, albeit indirectly, namely the Football Association of Wales. The association refused to answer Mr Pritchard, who comes from Caernarfon, because he had written in Welsh. The association said that it had no intention of operating through the medium of Welsh—either orally or in writing. Does that not clash with your policy of supporting people in the Urdd to use the language? What is your response to those comments?

[102] **Rosemary Butler:** I am sorry, Owen John, but I do not think that it is appropriate for Neil Ward to answer that, as he said that he was not prepared to answer any questions relating to the Football Association.

[103] **Owen John Thomas:** Did he say that?

[104] **Rosemary Butler:** Yes, at the beginning.

[105] **Owen John Thomas:** No, you said it actually.

[106] **Rosemary Butler:** No, I did not. Mr Ward made a point that he did not wish to comment on the Football Association. Although it is a good point, we need

to take it somewhere else. However, I am sure that he will answer the question about how the Football Association of Wales deals with Welsh-language issues.

[107] **Owen John Thomas:** Credaf eich bod yn ymddwyn yn awdurdodol, Cadeirydd, wrth beidio â gadael i Mr Ward ateb y cwestiwn y dewisais ei ofyn ar ran rhywun sydd wedi ysgrifennu ataf yr wythnos hon.

Owen John Thomas: I think that you are being authoritarian, Chair, by not allowing Mr Ward to answer the question that I asked on behalf of someone who wrote to me this week.

[108] **Rosemary Butler:** Owen John, I am sorry if you feel that I am being authoritarian. I am defending the rights of a person who has come to give evidence. He made a point at the beginning that he could not comment on FAW matters. Can we move on to another issue that we can deal with, and that is how the trust responds to the Welsh language? I think that what you have told us in here is very positive.

[109] **Mr Ward:** To respond to the first part of your question, regarding whether there is a strategic approach, yes, there is, and we are proactive. We have a network of county football development officers employed in partnership with local authorities. They have a focused approach and are looking to achieve the strategic aims that we have established, and their work programmes are filtered down to attack those areas of work. They are proactive, although they try to maintain a focused approach and work their way around the communities in which they work rather than go off into different areas, so that they do not spread themselves too thinly. They work in cluster groups, perhaps around a group of schools and clubs. The idea is to try to establish a pathway between the schools and the clubs. The initial contact will, therefore, be in schools, but in the longer term, we recognise that children will participate and play more regularly on a club-based method.

[110] In terms of the Welsh language, I reaffirm that I am employee of the FAW Football in the Community not the Football Association of Wales. We have a number of Welsh-speaking officers who are able to deliver through the medium of Welsh. I also explained our work with Urdd Gobaith Cymru, and the way in which we have trained their instructors to deliver and to coach through the medium of Welsh. So we have tackled two areas.

[111] **Rosemary Butler:** Can I just clarify who you are employed by?

[112] **Mr Ward:** The FAW Football in the Community Ltd, which is otherwise known as the FAW Trust.

[113] **Rosemary Butler:** I am sorry; I thought that you said that you were employed by the Football Association of Wales.

[114] **Mr Ward:** No, the FAW Football in the Community Ltd.

[115] **Val Lloyd:** I would like to ask a few questions. Mr Ward, thank you very much, I enjoyed reading your written presentation, and your expansion was very focused. I was especially interested in your reference to how the coaching scheme in the Rhondda had helped to increase social inclusion, because I have been privileged to be part of a similar coaching scheme in a Communities First ward in my area. A review of the scheme after six months showed a 12 per cent decrease in crime in the area. It was an independent review that highlighted that you can engage people through things that interest them, such as football, as well as learning key skills that helped them with future employment. It was a

pleasure.

[116] Following on from the social inclusion theme, I was interested to read about the work being done between Swansea City Football Club and the Royal National Institute of the Blind, and I wonder whether I, or the committee—which I am sure could be interested—could have a note to know a little bit more about how that operates. Would that be possible?

[117] **Mr Ward:** That would be possible. I could ask our disability co-ordinator in the south to produce a more in-depth report on the work that he has undertaken there in partnership with the Swansea City Football Club community scheme, which has done some sterling work in the community scheme. That highlights the need for a partnership approach. We try not to work in isolation and try very much to engage all the partners at a community level so that we can broaden the work that we do and that there is some sustainability and legacy for the future, rather than us being solely responsible for delivering. We must recognise the work of the Swansea city community scheme in that particular area.

[118] **Val Lloyd:** I am very pleased to hear that, because I represent Swansea. There have been other successful projects, such as the one focusing on crime prevention in Carmarthen and one in Bridgend. Are they going to be rolled out to other areas? The purpose of these projects is for people to learn and benefit from good practice. Are there any plans to roll them out?

[119] Very much along the same lines, I recently attended a football tournament for homeless people. It is an ongoing project and the teams go to the Homeless World Cup. Does your organisation have any input into that? I have seen the difference that it can make in giving people who sleep rough more life skills, helping them to become engaged again and improving their self-esteem.

[120] My final question is slightly different. We have heard, in another presentation, of the shortage of referees. The shortages were put down to problems with retaining referees because of the poor discipline of players and sometimes, in the younger teams, because of aggression from parents. You spoke about your success in increasing girls' participation in the sport. Do you have any views on how you could encourage more women to become referees?

[121] **Mr Ward:** I will try to respond to each of those points in turn. First, we have not been directly responsible for the Homeless World Cup. Our focus is very much on young people, and the remit that we have been given by the Football Association of Wales is under 16s, but if we were provided with the opportunity, and we were asked to engage in that type of work and it was deemed appropriate, we would certainly look at that.

[122] Secondly, on social inclusion, I have an understanding of the work that has gone on in Carmarthen Town AFC. That is very much an area of work that it has been engaged in; we have had little involvement in that, but I wanted to highlight how other partners have tackled the issue. These particular programmes can definitely be used as models of good practice to be rolled out. It is obviously an area of work that we have yet to get a consistent track record on, but we certainly could, over time, begin to roll it out, based on the good practice that has gone on elsewhere. As I alluded to in the paper, the work with South Wales Police has been particularly successful, and through our relationships with local authorities' fora, we have an opportunity to highlight good practice in other areas and draw on those as examples to develop in other communities.

[123] In terms of referees, the trust does not have a remit or responsibility for

referee training. That is very much the responsibility of the Football Association of Wales and its area associations. However, if the association felt that we could contribute, particularly in supporting more women and girls to get into refereeing, we would help in any way that we could.

10.10 a.m.

[124] **Lisa Francis:** I wanted to ask about inclusivity and how that extends to disabled players specifically. Do you run any mentoring schemes in which talented and capable players—and I mean your star players—help or mentor people with mobility problems, disabled people and take them under their wing? Do you operate any schemes like that at all? On the question of referees and problems with discipline, we have heard before that there seems to be a society evolving that is all too ready to challenge authority. I wondered what suggestions you have about trying to encourage more referees—not just women, but more in general?

[125] **Mr Ward:** Disability is an area of work that we have been engaged in for the past two years, and we have focused on understanding the needs of communities. The disabled population is quite diverse, and there are at least six distinct disabled groups with whom we could work. So, it has very much been a low-level focus approach. One thing that we looked at initially was developing a training programme for coaches that would assist them to understand the needs of disabled participants. We are rolling out a three-level programme—and we have finished the first, which is about awareness—so that people, particularly coaches, have an understanding of the different types of disabilities, the needs of those people and the adaptations that they could provide in their coaching activities so that they are more inclusive. In addition, if disabled participants wanted to play more regularly, what would be the access routes? It has been very much about awareness.

[126] We have no real legacy yet, in terms of high-profile disabled players. We do have Steve Johnson, who is a very high-profile player in England. He has helped to support the work that we have done, and so we use him from time to time. It will take time to identify and develop role models for the future, but that is a helpful suggestion and something that we will look at.

[127] On attitudes and behaviours, we helped the Football Association of Wales to devise its welfare policy and, as part of that, developed a code of conduct for coaches, parents and players, and we try to promote that as much as possible. We run a programme of workshops for coaches, so that they have an understanding of these types of issues, and we explain their responsibility as role models, as coaches and as people who influence young people. They have to demonstrate positive behaviour and encourage parents to do so as well. There is definitely more that could be done there. I have highlighted one example in Rhyl, where they are trying to encourage that. We have been talking to the Rhyl and District Junior Football League about how we could roll that out into other league areas as well. So, we have made a start, but I recognise that there is a long way to go.

[128] **Denise Idris Jones:** I am an Assembly Member from north Wales, okay? I am not going to speak in Welsh. What particular problems are caused by Wales's proximity to England, and what can be done to retain fans and talent in Wales? They will always be keen to go to support Liverpool and 'Man U', so what benefits does that proximity provide? Does the Welsh national squad benefit from Welsh players being developed by teams in the English system, and what other opportunities might this proximity provide?

[129] **Mr Ward:** That is a good question, thank you. The programmes that we have very much focus on developing Welsh talent, but it is obvious that, if players want to progress, and progress to a high level, we do not have the high-profile clubs that England has, so they will inevitably go there. That brings us a lot of benefits, though, because it means that our best players are playing at the highest level. If they are Welsh born, have Welsh blood, and qualify through their parents or grandparents, it means that we retain them. I know that people have drawn analogies with Michael Owen in north Wales, but he had no Welsh qualification, so he would not have been available to play for Wales. Similarly, Ryan Giggs was Welsh born and bred, and, although he grew up in Manchester, he could not qualify for England. So, in that respect, it has not been too much of a problem, but it would be a problem with dual qualification. Lewin Nyatanga is an example of someone who, having a British passport, could have played for any one of the home nations. What is important, therefore, is that we offer young people—as young as possible—a quality experience so that they identify with Wales and play for Wales in the future. Because Lewin had quality coaching, support and games, he decided to represent Wales.

[130] Outside that, for the future, we need to build on what we provide and offer and make sure that it is the very best for the children in our communities. Through the infrastructure that has developed in the Welsh Premier League, it is doing great work in establishing its academy programmes and building on the work at Swansea, Wrexham and Cardiff at the same time.

[131] Although our player base is small, if we get the structures right, as other countries such as Croatia and Norway have done, we can be successful in the future.

[132] **Rosemary Butler:** You made some really interesting points. Let us take up the issue of girls' football; there has been a 300 per cent increase, with a 50 per cent increase in the number of teams, but you think that there is a difficulty with facilities. Is that changing facilities or the availability of pitches? You mentioned Gwent; it would be helpful for us to have some information about the specific area, because one of the points of this report is to find the gaps so that we can make recommendations so that those gaps will be filled.

[133] Is it possible to have a copy of the CD-ROM being developed for the Cambrian village scheme? That sounds very interesting. I do not know whether you can provide that. Also, you made a good point about partnerships, and partnership in funding, which I found interesting. Do you want to say a bit more about that? You obviously chose to raise it because there is an issue at the back of your mind somewhere. You have told us how much you have received from the Welsh Assembly Government, through the sports council, but we are talking about the future and we are looking at aspirations, so perhaps you could tell us—you might be able to do it today—how much money you really need to deliver what you want. We cannot give it to you, but at least you can tell us what you want. [*Laughter.*]

[134] I see that Mr Pritchard is busily writing away: a verbatim report will be available to you, in case you miss something. It would be helpful to know the make-up of the trust's membership. You work for FAW football in the community; do any other similar groups link up to the trust?

[135] **Mr Ward:** To start with that point, I draw your attention to point 2 in the paper. The background to the trust is that we were established in 1996 by the governing body, the Football Association of Wales, as an attempt to ring-fence funding for development. Historically, because the funding cycle in the FAW is

very much dependent on the international draw, it would not be able to protect funding for development as they would have liked to, so it had the foresight to set up a trust. We are, therefore, a separate limited company and a registered charity that receives support not only from the Football Association of Wales, but also the Welsh Assembly Government and the Sports Council for Wales, and we have partnerships throughout Wales with local authorities, which employ our football development officers. That identifies the fact that we are very much a multi-partnership agency and we work through a network of partners to achieve what we want to do.

[136] **Rosemary Butler:** I would be interested to know who the members are.

[137] **Mr Ward:** In terms of the constitution, there are 14 members. Seven of those are elected by the Football Association of Wales, and seven are what we refer to as independent members, so they are from business and educational institutions and include chartered accountants, lawyers and so on. They bring business expertise to the trust, and then we have the Football Association of Wales members, who bring the football background, which is complementary to what we are trying to achieve. So, that is the composition of the board.

10.20 a.m.

[138] I would welcome the opportunity to showcase, at some point, the new initiatives that we have developed. I can acquire a copy of the CD-ROM for the Cambrian village trust and I would be happy to pass that forward. We have also produced a number of resources, 'Leading Football' being one, which is an interactive CD-ROM that supports coaches. We filmed about 90 coaching activities and put them onto a CD-ROM with other question-and-answer activities that help to support coaches in the longer term. When they come onto an initial training course, they have some understanding, but when they go away, they perhaps have difficulty going back to where they originally were in terms of the knowledge that they had. When you have a blank resource, it is very difficult, in one dimension, to understand how activities work but if you video them, you can show them and people can come back to them. There is also the opportunity to print it out so that they can take it as a resource to the coaching session. I can pass those resources to you and if there was an opportunity to come back in to showcase them, I would be very willing to do that.

[139] My comments on facilities were anecdotal. I would be happy to get more accurate information but would very much rely on the leagues and the area associations for that information and it would take me a bit of time to gather it, but I can certainly—

[140] **Rosemary Butler:** It is okay; we will be having representatives of local authorities in, so we can pinpoint that as an issue for them. It was only if you had it ready to hand. I do not want to give you any additional work.

[141] **Mr Ward:** I also understand that representatives of the National Playing Fields Association will perhaps submit evidence at some point. They may also be able to provide you with information on this.

[142] On funding, we currently receive £0.75 million through the Welsh Assembly Government and the Sports Council for Wales. We are going to submit—

[143] **Rosemary Butler:** Is that £0.75 million between the two?

[144] **Mr Ward:** Yes, that is between the two, per annum.

[145] We are going to put a business plan to the Sports Council for Wales in August in which we will detail our financial needs for the next four years. We have redeveloped our strategy, which was for 2002-07, and have now rewritten it so that it is for 2006-10. We are very much looking for support at least to 2010, to give us some continuity and stability in the operation of our activities. So, a sum in the region of the figure that I have quoted, namely £750,000, would help sustain what we are doing and would increase support from the Football Association of Wales at the same time, which we have already made an approach for. So, hopefully, that gives you an indication of what we require.

[146] **Rosemary Butler:** On the funding, how much forward notice do you get? Do you get two years' or three years' funding or do you have to go from 12 months to 12 months?

[147] **Mr Ward:** It has previously been on a 12-month cycle although we had an indication in 2002 from the Assembly of what the funding might be over a four-year period, but we would then go in on a year-to-year basis and make an application for that. We are now hoping that we can agree and establish a plan and funding for a four-year period, which, from what I understand from the sports council, could be achievable.

[148] **Denise Idris Jones:** I am pleased that you are keen to encourage young, female football teams—it is an excellent health initiative to keep them fit—but where do you see this leading, career-wise? I am not sure. I always remember meeting a girl, Rachel Brown, on an aeroplane flying back to the University of Pittsburgh. She had a sports scholarship there but she played in goal for England. Every time they had a game, she had to fly back. That was proving costly and she was having such huge problems with sponsorship that she was seeing herself having to give up. I am sure that she has given up now; this was some time ago.

[149] **Mr Ward:** Opportunities at the league level are improving for women. There are professional leagues on the continent, such as in Italy, and there are also leagues in the States. At one time, England was considering a full-time professional league. I think that, as the profile of women's football grows—and it is growing rapidly; that is recognised—we will see more screenings of women's international games than we have seen in the past. I think that it is inevitable, in time, that that will happen and it will obviously give something for young aspiring female players to reach for, which is obviously very pleasing.

[150] **Rosemary Butler:** Turning back to the volunteers, all the people who work with you are highly professional but clubs cannot manage without volunteers. It is an issue that we come across in athletics, swimming and all sports. Are you doing anything about that? Or, do you not see it as part of your role to try to encourage volunteers to help run clubs?

[151] **Mr Ward:** That is certainly a big part of what we do. We obviously offer support and training to coaches. Through the club scheme, we have a resource that we have introduced to help clubs to structure and organise themselves, perhaps slightly better than the current situation. We are mindful of the increasing legislation that is being placed upon volunteers, particularly in the areas of insurance and child protection. We try to offer support to the clubs to assist them through those processes. We have to be realistic; and volunteers are extremely concerned by these. We recognise the need for such legislation to be brought in, particularly to protect vulnerable children and adults, so we must do as much as we can to support them in what we are doing.

[152] We will be running workshops for clubs. We have introduced the club

accreditation scheme which we hope will be rolled out to all clubs within the next four years, to support what they are doing. As part of that, we offer training, support, guidance on what is required, access to funding, pointing them in the right direction to help them to achieve what they want to achieve. I think that the key concerns are probably funding and legislation; time constraints are another, given the way that society has changed so much. We are trying to encourage clubs to introduce more volunteers into clubs so that the responsibility and workload is shared among people rather than the one or two keen people who probably currently run the club, taking all responsibility. With time, they will get fed up and run down by that responsibility. Therefore, we are looking at initiatives that encourage more parents to offer the skills and expertise that they might have from a professional background to support the needs of clubs in the future so that they contribute something back to the club for providing what we hope would be a quality experience for their child.

[153] **Rosemary Butler:** Thank you. It has been a very interesting and informative session. We may come back to you for something further in the future, but that is only if something comes up during our review. We have a series of people who will be coming to give us evidence. We will be going to north Wales in June, so we can have a look at some facilities there. Thank you again; it has been very helpful.

[154] We will now break for coffee.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 10.28 a.m. a 10.51 a.m.
The meeting adjourned between 10.28 a.m. and 10.51 a.m.*

Doc34

Thursday, 11 May 2006

Adolygiad o Bêl-droed yng Nghymru The Review of Football in Wales	
[5] Rosemary Butler: This is the continuation of our review of football. We have had some very interesting presentations so far. We are trying to look at football across Wales, and how it is delivering for younger people in particular. This morning, we are looking at how the broadcasters are dealing with football generally. I think that it has been agreed that we will have the presentations first, followed by questions.	
[6] I welcome some very unfamiliar faces. [<i>Laughter.</i>] We have Keith Jones and Nigel Walker from the BBC, and Gareth Davies and Rhian Gibson from S4C. Who is going to make the first presentation? Keith?	
[7] Mr Jones: Bore da. Diolch am y gwahoddiad i ddod yma heddiw, am y cyfle i sôn am yr hyn y mae'r BBC yn ei wneud ym maes chwaraeon, ac am y cyfle i roi'r dystiolaeth ysgrifenedig a gawsoch wythnos yn ôl.	Mr Jones: Good morning. Thank you for the invitation to come here today, for the opportunity to tell you about what the BBC is doing in terms of sport, and for the opportunity to provide written evidence, which you received a week ago.
[8] Yr ydych wedi cyfeirio'n barod at y ffaith efallai nad oes yn rhaid i mi gyflwyno Nigel Walker, sef pennaeth chwaraeon BBC Cymru. Bydd Nigel, mewn eiliad, yn sôn am y cyfrifoldebau sydd ganddo fel pennaeth yr adran.	You have already referred to the fact that perhaps I do not need to introduce Nigel Walker, the head of sport at BBC Wales. Nigel, in a second, will talk about his responsibilities as head of the department.
[9] Hoffwn fanteisio ar y cyfle hwn i danlinellu i aelodau'r pwyllgor ymrwymiad y BBC i'r amrywiol chwaraeon yng Nghymru. Ar draws ein holl wasanaethau, yn Saesneg ac yn Gymraeg, gwelwn mai ein dyletswydd fel darlledwr cyhoeddus yw rhoi'r gwasanaeth gorau posibl, nid yn unig i'r rhai sy'n cefnogi'r campau yn selog, ond i'r rhai sy'n cael eu swyno gan ddrama ac emosiwn digwyddiad chwaraeon mawr—mae'r ddrama a'r emosiwn yn aml iawn yn gysylltiedig â digwyddiadau rhyngwladol, wrth gwrs. Pan fydd timau cenedlaethol yn chwarae, mae'r achlysuron hynny yn adegau pryd y gall y genedl gyfan ddod ynghyd i ddilyn hynt a helynt y chwarae ar y cae, ac oddi arno yn aml, fel y gwelwyd yn ddiweddar.	I wish to take advantage of this opportunity to underline to committee members the BBC's commitment to different sports in Wales. Across all our services, in English and Welsh, we see that our responsibility as a public broadcaster is to provide the best possible service, not only to committed sports fans, but to those who are mesmerised by the drama and emotion of a major sporting event—that drama and emotion is often linked to international sporting events, of course. When national teams play, those occasions are an opportunity for the whole nation to come together to follow the trials and tribulations of events on the field, and often off the field, as we have seen recently.
[10] Fel y gwyr pawb, wrth gwrs, ar hyn o bryd mae bwch yn yr hyn y gallwn ei gynnig ar y teledu, oherwydd nid yw'r hawliau gennym i ddangos y tim pêl-droed cenedlaethol yn chwarae ar deledu daearol yn gyntaf. Dyma'r gemau cartref nad oes gennym yr	As everyone knows, of course, at present, there is a gap in what we are able to provide on television, because we do not have the rights to show the national football team games on terrestrial television first. Those are the home games for which we do not have

<p>hawliau ar eu cyfer. Yr oedd torri'r cysylltiad hwnnw, ddwy flynedd yn ôl, yn siom fawr i ni.</p>	<p>the rights. The breaking of that link, two years ago, was a huge disappointment to us.</p>
<p>9.10 a.m.</p>	
<p>[11] Nid oes angen dweud y byddwn yn gweithio'n galed i geisio adfer y sefyllfa honno ac i adennill y cysylltiad rhwng gêm genedlaethol a darlledwr cenedlaethol. Credwn yn gryf fod teledu torfol sydd ar yr awyr yn ddi-dâl nid yn unig yn galluogi cefnogwyr i ddilyn y gemau, ond y mae hefyd yn codi ymwybyddiaeth o'r gêm a diddordeb yn y gêm ymysg plant a phobl ifanc, yn ogystal ag oedolion.</p>	<p>I do not think that I need to say that we will work hard to try to restore that situation and to regain the link between national games and a national broadcaster. We strongly believe that mass broadcasting, which is available free to air, not only enables supporters to follow matches, but also raises awareness of the game and interest among children and young people, as well as adults.</p>
<p>[12] Fel y gwelwch o'r dystiolaeth yr ydym wedi ei hanfon atoch, mae pêldroed yn dal yn amlwg yn ein cynnyrch chwaraeon. Aethom ati i brynu'r hawl gan BSkyB i ddangos gemau Cymru yn hwyrach yn y Gymraeg ar S4C ac yr ydym hefyd yn manteisio ar bob cyfle i brynu hawliau i ddangos gemau pêldroed Cymru oddi cartref, ac i'w darparu ar ein gwasanaethau ar BBC Cymru a hefyd ar S4C ar yr un pryd. I sôn ychydig am y rhaglenni hynny, yr wyf am roi cyfle i Nigel sôn am yr hyn yr ydym yn ei wneud ar radio, ar deledu ac ar-lein.</p>	<p>As you will see from the evidence that we have sent to you, football is still a prominent part of our sports output. We acquired the rights from BSkyB to show Wales matches later, in Welsh, on S4C and we also take advantage of every opportunity afforded to us to purchase rights to show Wales's away matches and to broadcast them on BBC Wales and S4C at the same time. To say a little about those programmes, I am going to give Nigel an opportunity to talk about what we do on radio, television and online.</p>
<p>[13] Mr Walker: As far as our strategy is concerned, it is very much a tri-media approach—radio, television and online services—and we have a bilingual approach. We are very much into 360 degree commissioning. In other words, we never look at television, radio or online services in isolation; we look at the three things together wherever possible to get maximum impact across our range of output.</p>	
<p>[14] I will talk about radio first and give you a typical Saturday afternoon on Radio Cymru, which would be our Saturday afternoon sports programme, <i>Camp Lawn</i>. We send reporters and pundits to a range of games, starting with the English premiership, because there is considerable Welsh interest in that, be it in Mark Hughes and Chris Coleman, the managers of Blackburn Rovers FC and Fulham FC respectively, or in players such as Mark Pembleton at Fulham, Simon Davies at Everton FC or Bellamy and Savage at Blackburn, and so on. We know that there is huge interest in Wales in Liverpool FC, Everton FC and Manchester United, so we send reporters to those games. Beneath that, we have full-match commentaries of Cardiff City, Swansea City and Wrexham; we send full commentary teams there. We also send reporters to a mixture of Welsh premier games, to follow the likes of Port Talbot Town FC, Rhyl FC, Bangor City FC, and so on. We occasionally send reporters to the so-called three exiles, Merthyr Tydfil FC, Newport County AFC and Colwyn Bay FC. I have to be careful with my terminology so that I do not receive letters as a result. That would be a typical Saturday afternoon's football on Radio Cymru.</p>	
<p>[15] Radio Wales is different, simply because we are able to broadcast on medium wave and FM. On medium wave, we give a similar rolling service as that given on Radio Cymru, but we are able to split FM three ways, so we give</p>	

<p>dedicated commentaries to Wrexham, Cardiff and Swansea matches. That has proved popular with our audience. It is not an exact science, but generally speaking, the south west will receive Swansea City commentaries, Cardiff and its surrounding areas and a little further north will receive Cardiff City commentaries, and the majority of north Wales will receive the Wrexham commentary. That would be our typical Saturday afternoon on Radio Wales and Radio Cymru. Of course, we also broadcast international football matches. We have a four-year contract with the Football Association of Wales to broadcast all of Wales's home international matches and we secure the rights for the away matches as they become available.</p>	<p>[16] As far as television is concerned, it is about added value and it centres on our interactive service—the red button service. For a typical international—an international that we are not producing live for S4C—our interactive stream will include the Radio Cymru commentary for those who want to access it through the red button, or our <i>Ar y Marc</i> stream. For those of you who are not familiar with <i>Ar y Marc</i>, it is a football programme that goes out during the season on Radio Cymru. In fact, in terms of audience figures, it is our best performing programme on Saturday. Basically, during an international, experienced broadcasters give a fan's view of the game. Therefore, it is not an actual commentary, it is football enthusiasts talking about the game and it has proved to be incredibly popular.</p>
<p>[17] Our third platform is online. We have message boards throughout the year where fans get to pick the team, to make comment and to enter into debate. We have those in English and Welsh, and, of course, we stream our commentary wherever the rights are available, and we do so online also. That is a brief snapshot of what we do in terms of football on BBC Wales.</p>	<p>[18] Mr Davies: Diolch am y gwahoddiad i ddod yma ac, efallai, i egluro'n ehangach ddiddordeb a chyfraniad S4C i chwaraeon—pêl-droed yn benodol. Mae S4C wedi bod ynghlwm wrth bêl-droed ers rhai blynyddoedd yn awr, a'r dystiolaeth yw mai <i>Sgorio</i> a <i>Pobol y Cwm</i> yw'r ddwy raglen mwyaf adnabyddus ymhlith gwylwyr S4C. Mae <i>Sgorio</i> wedi bod yn mynd ers dros 20 mlynedd, a'r rhaglen honno yw'r adlewyrchiad gorau o bêl-droed Ewrop, o'r Almaen, yr Eidal a Sbaen.</p>
<p>[19] Mae strategaeth raglenni S4C yn glir iawn o ran chwaraeon. Mae'n adrodd yn blwmp ac yn blaen ein bod ni eisiau sicrhau hawliau chwaraeon <i>exclusive</i>, ac mae hynny'n allweddol i ni er mwyn cynnal y gynulleidfa fwyaf bosibl. Gobeithiwn ddenu gwylwyr i'r sianel nad ydynt fel arfer yn edrych ar S4C. Mae chwaraeon wedi chwarae rhan allweddol, ac maent yn parhau i chwarae rhan allweddol, yn hynny o beth. Mae'r strategaeth hefyd yn cyfeirio at ehangu'n darpariaeth i ddilynwyr pêl-droed ar y lefel ryngwladol a'r lefel ddomestig. Credaf ein bod, i raddau, wedi llwyddo i gyflawni hynny drwy gydweithio â Chymdeithas Bêl-droed Cymru, y BBC, Sky a'r sector</p>	<p>Mr Davies: Thank you for the invitation to come here and, perhaps, to explain further S4C's interest in, and contribution to, sports—football in particular. S4C has been linked with football for some years now, and the evidence is that <i>Sgorio</i> and <i>Pobol y Cwm</i> are the two most well-known programmes among S4C's viewers. <i>Sgorio</i> has been going for over 20 years and is, of course, the best reflection of European football, from Germany, Italy and Spain.</p> <p>S4C's programming strategy is very clear with regard to sports. It states categorically that we want to ensure exclusive sports rights, and that is crucial for us to be able to support the largest audience possible. We hope to attract viewers to the channel who would not normally watch S4C. Sports have played a significant role, and they continue to play a significant role, in that regard. The strategy also refers to widening our provision to followers of football at the international level and at the domestic level. I think that we have succeeded, to a degree, in achieving that through co-operating with the Football Association of Wales, the BBC, Sky and the independent sector. So,</p>

<p>annibynnol. Felly, mae sawl partner yn ein galluogi i ddod â pêl-droed i sgrin S4C.</p>	<p>several partners enable us to bring football to S4C's screen.</p>
<p>[20] Rhaid cofio am y sefyllfa y bu i Keith gyfeirio ati o ran ceisio sicrhau hawliau darlledu, a'r byd pêl-droed, fel y gwyddoch, yw'r mwyaf cystadleuol. I roi tystiolaeth o hynny, dim ond yr wythnos diwethaf, cyhoeddodd Sky a Setanta, cwmni cymharol fach o Iwerddon, gytundeb newydd ag uwch-gynghrair Lloegr, yn dechrau o'r flwyddyn nesaf, gwerth £1.7 biliwn dros dair blynedd. Gyda 138 o gemau, mae hynny'n golygu £4 miliwn am bob gêm fyw ar y teledu. Mae hynny yn rhoi blas ichi o ba mor ddifrifol a chostus y gall pêl-droed fod ar y teledu.</p>	<p>One must bear in mind the situation to which Keith referred with regard to trying to secure broadcasting rights, and the world of football, as you know, is the most competitive. There is evidence of this in that, just last week, Sky and Setanta, a relatively small company from Ireland, announced a new contract with the English premier league, starting next year, worth £1.7 billion over three years. With 138 games, that works out at £4 million for every live game televised. That gives you a taste of how serious and costly the televising of football can be.</p>
<p>[21] Dros gyfnod, yr ydym wedi darlledu holl gemau rhyngwladol Cymru ar ôl i Sky wneud hynny—yn nes ymlaen yr un dydd neu yn y nos. Hefyd, yr ydym wedi bod yn darlledu holl gemau tîm Cymru dan 21, sy'n bwysig o edrych ymlaen at ddatblygu chwaraeon y genhedlaeth newydd. Ar yr ochr ddomestig, mae gemau cynghrair Cymru yn cael eu darlledu bob nos Sadwrn ar S4C; dros y ddwy flynedd diwethaf, dyna'r sylw mwyaf mae'r gynghrair honno wedi ei gael. Yr wyf yn credu y byddai pawb yn cytuno bod safon y gynghrair, y cyfleusterau a'r adnoddau sydd ar gael yn y clybiau hefyd yn cynyddu ac yn gwella. Credaf i S4C chwarae rôl fach wrth gyflawni hynny.</p>	<p>Over a period of time, we have been broadcasting all the Wales international games after Sky has done that—later the same day or in the evening. Also, we have been broadcasting all the Wales under-21 games, which is important in terms of looking towards developing sport for the next generation. On the domestic front, the Welsh league games are broadcast every Saturday night on S4C; over the last two years, that has been the most attention that the league has had. I am certain that the standard of the league, the facilities and the amenities available to the clubs have also increased and improved. I believe that S4C has played a small role in achieving that.</p>
<p>[22] Mae ein rhaglen nos Sadwrn yn dod o glybiau ar hyd a lled Cymru. Mae'n neis i ni fel sianel fynd i leoedd yn y gogledd, y gorllewin, y dwyrain a'r de. Mae hynny wedi helpu, mewn ffordd, i ddod â ni yn nes at ein cynulleidfa.</p>	<p>Our Saturday evening programme comes from clubs all over Wales. It is nice for us as a channel to go to places in north, west, east and south Wales. That has helped, in a way, to bring us a little closer to our audience.</p>
<p>[23] Yn gyflym, o ran y mathau o bêl-droed y gallwch ei weld ar S4C, yr ydym yn siarad am holl gemau rhyngwladol Cymru gartref, gemau'r tîm dan 21, Cwpan Cymru, wrth gwrs, a oedd yn fyw ar S4C ddydd Sul diwethaf, y cyfan o'r gynghrair yn ystod y tymor, a <i>Sgorio</i>, sy'n dod â'r pêl-droed gorau o Ewrop. Hefyd, yn ogystal ag edrych am hawliau i ddarlledu gemau—gyda phob camp—yr ydym yn edrych i gael hawliau i'n galluogi i gynnwys y gorau o'r gemau mewn rhaglenni eraill. Yn aml, os ydych yn prynu hawliau, dim ond y gêm a</p>	<p>Briefly, with regard to the types of football that you can watch on S4C, we are talking about all Wales international home matches, the under-21 team's matches, the Welsh Cup, of course, which was broadcast live on S4C last Sunday, the whole of the league during the season, and <i>Sgorio</i>, which showcases the best of European football. Also, in addition to securing the rights to broadcast matches—with all sports—we are looking to secure the rights to enable us to include the best of the games in other programmes. Often,</p>

<p>gewch chi; yr ydym yn ceisio sicrhau ein bod yn cael hawliau er mwyn cynhyrchu rhaglenni fel <i>Sgorio Bach yn Planed Plant</i> a <i>Peldroedio</i>, sef cyfres sydd wedi bod yn rhedeg ar S4C lle mae sgiliau'r sêr yn cael eu cyflwyno i blant er mwyn iddynt geisio eu hefelychu a datblygu eu sgiliau eu hunain.</p>	<p>if you buy the rights, you get only the game, but we are trying to ensure that we get the rights to produce programmes such as <i>Sgorio Bach for Planed Plant</i> and <i>Peldroedio</i>, which is a series on S4C where the skills of stars are introduced to children so that they can try to imitate them and improve their own skills.</p>
<p>9.20 a.m.</p>	
<p>[24] Mae'r pwynt am blant yn hollbwysig. Mae'n iawn i ddod â'r gemau mawr sy'n cynhyrfu'r genedl i'r sgrin er mwyn cael y plant i ddod, ond gobeithiaf y byddwn yn perswadio plant i fynd allan i geisio efelychu'r sêr ac i gymryd rhan mewn chwaraeon. Byddai hynny wedyn nid yn unig yn dod o hyd i'r Ryan Giggs nesaf, ond byddai'n symud ymlaen eich agenda chi o safbwynt hybu iechyd. Byddai'r ffaith y byddent allan ar y stryd neu yn y parc yn cicio neu'n taflu pêl yn amlwg yn gwella'u hiechyd a'u sgiliau cymdeithasol gan eu gwneud yn bobl sy'n deall gwahaniaethau ac yn gallu trafod ennill a cholli a fyddai, mewn ffordd, yn eu gwneud yn bobl fwy cyflawn ar gyfer y dyfodol. Mae hynny hefyd yn bwysig ym myd chwaraeon ac yr wyf yn teimlo'n eithaf cryf am hynny.</p>	<p>The point about children is crucial. It is right to bring the big games that excite the nation to the screen to get children to come, but I hope that we will persuade children to go out and try to imitate the stars and to take part in sports. That would then not only find us the next Ryan Giggs, but it would advance your agenda in terms of health promotion. The fact that they would be out on the street or in the park kicking or throwing a ball would obviously improve their health and their social skills, turning them into people who understand differences and who can handle winning and losing, which would, in a sense, make them more rounded people for the future. That is also important in the world of sports and I feel quite strongly about that.</p>
<p>[25] Yn amlwg, pêl-droed yw'r pwnc heddiw, ond mae S4C hefyd yn amlwg iawn o ran y campau eraill, o safbwynt rygbi a raliô. Yr ydym yn cefnogi cyfres y byd, gyda phwyslais arbennig ar y rali sy'n digwydd yng Nghymru ar ddiwedd bob blwyddyn. Mae ambell i raglen <i>one-off</i> hefyd; er enghraifft gwnaethom raglen ar David Davies a enillodd fedal aur yng Ngemau'r Gymanwlad yn fuan ar ôl ei lwyddiant. Yr ydym yn chwarae rhan allweddol yn dod â digwyddiadau allweddol i'r genedl i gyd. Yr wyf hefyd yn credu bod yr elfen arall yr ydym wedi ei thrafod yr un mor bwysig, o safbwynt targedu pobl ifanc i ddod i edrych ar y sianel ac ar chwaraeon. Gobeithiwn y byddant yn cymryd rhan mewn chwaraeon.</p>	<p>Obviously, football is today's subject, but S4C is also prominent in terms of other sports, especially in terms of rugby and rallying. We support the world series, with a special emphasis on the rally that is held in Wales at the end of every year. We also make occasional one-off programmes; for example, we produced a programme on David Davies who won a gold medal in the Commonwealth Games soon after his success. We play a key role in terms of broadcasting key events to the whole nation. I also believe that the other aspect that we have discussed is as important, in terms of targeting young people to come to watch the channel for sports. We hope that they will take part in sports.</p>
<p>[26] Rosemary Butler: Thank you for that. Welcome, Mr Blight.</p>	
<p>[27] Mr Blight: I apologise—there was a lot of traffic, I am afraid.</p>	
<p>[28] Rosemary Butler: Do not worry; we were late starting because we had a difficulty here. I think that we will question the broadcasters first and then we will come to you.</p>	
<p>[29] Val Lloyd: I have four questions and they may be specific or across the</p>	

<p>piece. I am very interested in what you said and I do hear some of the football sports reports although I am not particularly a football fan. I have another sport that is my favourite—</p>
<p>[30] Rosemary Butler: We should have wished Swansea well before we started.</p>
<p>[31] Val Lloyd: I was going to come to that at the end.</p>
<p>[32] Rosemary Butler: I am sorry.</p>
<p>[33] Val Lloyd: I was going to ask everyone to join me in wishing them well in their match tonight.</p>
<p>[34] I listen, particularly on a Saturday, and I could empathise with much of what you were saying. How do you, as broadcasters, utilise what opportunities there might be to promote women's football in Wales?</p>
<p>[35] How do you support inclusiveness? Do you have any targeted projects or programmes for that? How might new technology, such as broadband and nonlinear broadcasting, be used to increase the coverage of games by smaller clubs and minority teams? I know that you did dwell on that a little.</p>
<p>[36] I have a particular question regarding S4C. Is there any English-language provision for English speakers to follow football matches that are broadcast on S4C? I am aware that there is some English-language provision for digital viewers—I think that you can switch to a radio commentary, if I remember some listening that I have done—but not everyone has switched over. It is not quite 2009 yet, so can you tell me what is being done to address that?</p>
<p>[37] Mr Jones: Of your three questions, I will take the third and go backwards. One advantage of having an international rugby player on my right-hand side is that he can take a pass; I will pass some on to him.</p>
<p>[38] Owen John Thomas: I hope that it will not be a hospital pass.</p>
<p>[39] Mr Jones: Hopefully not. In terms of new technology, I am fortunate to also have responsibility for new media in the work that we do in BBC Wales. In terms of piloting new ideas, we had an experiment up in Hull, in a local television pilot area, where there is a great interest in ice hockey. We tried, in that area, to pilot the coverage of ice-hockey matches, without going to the expense of using the usual outside broadcast facilities. The lesson from that was that local appeal always attracts people. When we transfer that to our own areas, we are also looking at the potential of local content, in terms of news, sport and so on, and one of the platforms on which we could deliver that is broadband. We are looking at that very carefully, and there are other pilots going on within the BBC using other digital platforms to pilot that kind of operation.</p>
<p>[40] On the other two issues—and perhaps I will pull Nigel in at this point—in terms of inclusiveness, as you heard, the approach that we described across platform is designed to try to pull in as many people as possible and to engage people in discussion and debate. For the first time, by using message boards and so on, we are getting views from people right across Wales, and they are contributing to the output. Those are some of the most important elements of our output. Also, it is about getting out and meeting people. Gareth referred earlier to football programmes, which are actually produced at local clubs. That is about being in touch with people and attempting to be as inclusive as possible.</p>
<p>[41] Mr Walker: To pick up on the point on inclusivity, Raise Your Game is an online service that is run by our education department, in association with the sport department, which is aimed at inclusivity. It is primarily aimed at younger people, so you get tips from Colin Jackson—you can access them if you have broadband—where Colin Jackson talks about what it takes to achieve success. John Derrick, the Glamorgan County Cricket Club coach, talks about coaching, and David Davies talks about his success at the Commonwealth Games, his diet and so on. So, that is aimed at everyone. We have coaches and sport stars, be they male or female, experienced or inexperienced. Nicole Cook is also involved.</p>

So, all types of people are contributing, which helps the inclusivity angle.

[42] In terms of women's football, we carry a report of women's football on bulletins on Radio Wales, Radio Cymru, *Wales Today* and *Newyddion*. We have just commissioned some audience research, which reported back this week. Several group sessions were held up and down Wales—I think that there were six in all—and I attended the two sessions that took place in Cardiff. One group consisted of women aged over 45. There were 12 ladies who chewed the fat about sport for an hour. There was also a male group of 25 to 44-year-olds. In the women's group, there was a Cardiff City Ladies Football Club fan who wanted more reports on the team—I did not contribute to the debate as I was in another room listening. The review reported back this week, and, during the next few weeks, people will be looking at how we can represent women's football even better than we do at the moment. So, it is an ongoing issue. We have reports online and on the radio on women's football, but we need to do more, and that is what the groups said. We had a debate about it this week, and we have to report back in two or three weeks on how we are going to address that particular issue.

[43] **Ms Gibson:** On women's football, this is one of the fastest-growing sports among women. At the moment, as Nigel and Keith mentioned, it is covered on *Newyddion*. If Bangor City Girls Football Club, for example, is playing well, or if an Arsenal Football Club player comes from Wales, there will be features on those stories. The same happens on our *Wedi 7* nightly magazine programme from Llanelli, on which certain teams are featured. At the moment, that is how we reflect it, but, again, as a growing sport, it is included in different programmes as well. For example, *Peldroedio*, the programme for young footballers on S4C, also reflects the fact that girls play football as well.

[44] **Mr Davies:** On the last question on English-language coverage, it is all down to the rights that we can secure. All our football rights are Welsh-language only. For example, when the Welsh team plays at home, Sky has all the English-language rights and will not release them, so there is the opportunity to access Welsh-language rights.

9.30 a.m.

[45] It happens across the range, not only with football. However, it is probably more stringently policed in football, because of the different territories and the different languages. We also come across this issue in rugby. Some of what we produce could be done in either language, but we generally manage to secure Welsh-language rights and we are, therefore, restricted in what we can broadcast in football.

[46] **Val Lloyd:** I may have misunderstood or misinterpreted what was said, but I thought that you had a scheme where people could, if they have digital television, get a commentary. Am I mistaken?

[47] **Mr Davies:** The only English that you would see would be subtitling. However, that subtitling would be for studio discussions only and not for the action, because we are not allowed to do that.

[48] **Owen John Thomas:** Credaf ein bod yn cymryd yn ganiataol yr hyn yr ydych yn ei wneud. Wrth glywed am gynnwys y rhestr, mae hi'n wyrth bod gwasanaeth mor eang mewn gwlad mor fach gyda dwy iaith. Mae'r hyn sydd gennyf i'w ddweud yn ymwneud â diddordeb personol. Yr wyf yn aml yn gwranddo ar y radio ar brynhawn dydd Sadwrn ac, o bryd i'w gilydd, hoffwn glywed sut mae Caerdydd yn gwneud—os yw'r tîm yn ennill neu fel arall. Fodd

Owen John Thomas: I think that we take what you do for granted. Having heard the list today, it is a miracle that there is such a wide-ranging service in such a small country that has two languages. What I have to say relates to a personal interest. I often listen to the radio on Saturday afternoons and, every so often, I would like to hear how Cardiff is doing—if the team is winning or otherwise. However, for some reason, those producing the programme will

<p>bynnag, am ryw reswm, mae pwy bynnag sy'n gwneud y rhaglen yn penderfynu mynd draw at, er enghraifft, Everton neu Blackburn i weld sut mae'r timau hynny yn gwneud—er nad yw'n gymaint o broblem â Blackburn oherwydd bod cysylltiad Cymreig yn y fan honno. Yr wyf yn gofyn i mi fy hun, 'Pam yn y byd maent am wybod sut mae Chelsea yn gwneud; yr wyf am wybod sut mae Caerdydd yn gwneud'. Yr wyf yn siwr bod nifer o bobl yn cynhyrfu ac yn colli amynedd oherwydd hyn. Gwerthfawrogaf ei bod yn faes eang, ac yr wyf yn siwr bod cynulleidfa sylweddol gan y rhaglen. Sut ydych yn penderfynu sut i rannu'r amser rhwng y clybiau a chynghreiriau gwahanol? Yr wyf yn siwr bod llawer o waith i'w wneud ymlaen llaw i baratoi'r amserlen ac yn y blaen.</p>	<p>decide to go over to, for example, Everton or Blackburn to see how those teams are doing—though it is not as much of a problem with Blackburn as that team has a Welsh connection. I ask myself, 'Why on earth do people want to know how Chelsea is doing; I want to hear how Cardiff is doing'. I am sure that this annoys many people and tests their patience. I appreciate that it is a broad field, and I am sure that the programme has a substantial audience. How do you decide how to divide the time between the various clubs and leagues? I am sure that a lot of work is done beforehand in preparing the timetable and so on.</p>
<p>[49] Gan edrych i'r dyfodol, sut ydych yn rhagweld y rhaglenni yn datblygu ar Radio Wales, Radio Cymru, S4C, BBC 2 Cymru ac yn y blaen?</p>	<p>Looking to the future, how do you see the programmes developing on Radio Wales, Radio Cymru, S4C, BBC2 Wales and so on?</p>
<p>[50] Mr Jones: Efallai y dylai Nigel gymryd y cwestiwn cyntaf.</p>	<p>Mr Jones: Perhaps Nigel should take the first question.</p>
<p>[51] Mr Walker: Yes, I will deal with the first question. The simple answer to that is that it is based on audience research. Based on this, our understanding is that there are more Liverpool supporters in Wales than there are Cardiff City supporters. Liverpool, Everton and Manchester United are incredibly popular in Wales. We also take into account the Welsh interest in clubs such as Fulham, Blackburn and West Ham, which I have spoken about, to reach the balance. On Radio Cymru, which is one service, the split is down to the producer, but it is based on editorial steer from me with regard to what we should be doing. We major on Welsh teams, but, if we want a larger listening audience, we are required to cater for those who are interested in Liverpool, Everton, Manchester United and so on.</p>	
<p>[52] As I explained in my introduction, it is much simpler on Radio Wales. We have the same rolling service on medium wave, so you will get a range of commentary and reports on football clubs and football players across the UK. However, on FM, it is far more specific. Because of the three-way split that we can achieve on FM, you will hear dedicated, uninterrupted commentary of Swansea games if you live in the south-west, of Cardiff games if you live in Cardiff and the surrounding areas, and of Wrexham games in north Wales. It is much easier in the English language. Unfortunately, technology does not currently allow us to do the same thing on Radio Cymru. However, our service is as comprehensive and as targeted as it should be as far as we are concerned, and that is based on audience research.</p>	
<p>[53] Mr Jones: To respond to your second question—which links into the thrust of your first question—in future, it will be about what the viewer, listener or online user wants at the time. It will not be the editorial decision by the producer or the director of the programme that will drive what people will want, rather than what they are given. Therefore, it is about universality on demand. There are developments in the way in which people can access any content results, and</p>	

<p>so on, on mobile phones, PDAs and laptops. These have been referred to in new media terms as 'Martini media'—'any time, any place'. That is true for sport, which requires that live-ness, as it were. That is the challenge that we face in terms of our programme makers.</p>	
<p>[54] Owen John Thomas: A oes posibilrwydd yn y dyfodol y bydd Radio Cymru yn cael yr un rhyddid, gan ei bod yn amlwg bod elfen dechnegol yn penderfynu hyn, ac mae Radio Wales yn meddu ar hynny bellach, sef y gallu i gael tri gwahanol beth yn rhedeg ar yr un pryd?</p>	<p>Owen John Thomas: Is there a possibility that in future Radio Cymru will have the same freedom, because it is ultimately a technical issue, particularly given that Radio Wales now has that capacity to have three simultaneous broadcasts?</p>
<p>[55] Mr Jones: Dof yn ôl at fater yr ydym wedi ei drafod yn y pwyllgor hwn yn y gorffennol, sef bod y gallu yn bodoli gyda DAB ar radio digidol i hollti'r gwasanaeth ar adegau. Hynny yw, gellir defnyddio rhan o'r gwasanaeth ar gyfer gwasanaethau gwahanol ar adegau. Serch hynny, fel y gwyr aelodau'r pwyllgor, nid yw'r gwasanaeth ar gael ar draws Cymru ar hyn o bryd, felly gobeithiwn ddatrys y broblem honno cyn chwilio am atebion eraill.</p>	<p>Mr Jones: I return to an issue which we have previously discussed in committee, namely that the capacity exists with DAB on digital radio to split the service at times. That is, part of the service can be used for different services at times. However, members of the committee will know that that service is not currently available across Wales, so we hope to solve that problem before looking at other solutions.</p>
<p>[56] Mr Davies: O safbwynt datblygu rhaglenni yn y dyfodol, y peth pwysig yr ydym yn gorfod ei wneud yn S4C yw sicrhau ein bod yn cadw'r hawliau. Os nad ydym yn meddu ar yr hawliau, nid yw'n bosibl gwneud rhaglenni, felly mae hynny'n hollbwysig o'n safbwynt ni. Mae'n mynd yn galetach, a chyfeiriaais at y ffaith bod y gost yn cynyddu yn Lloegr ar hyn o bryd, ond yr ydym hefyd yn gweld safonau yng Nghymru yn codi wrth i'r gynghrair wella'n aruthrol yn ystod y pum mlynedd diwethaf, a phwy a wyr beth fydd yn digwydd yn y dyfodol? Felly, mae'n rhaid dal at i weithio mewn partneriaeth â deiliaid yr hawliau, megis y BBC a darlledwyr eraill.</p>	<p>Mr Davies: In terms of the development of future programming, the important thing for S4C to do is to ensure that we retain the rights. If we do not have the rights, we cannot make the programme, so that is crucial from our point of view. It is becoming more difficult, and I referred to the current increase in costs in England, but we have also seen standards in Wales raise, in that the league of Wales has improved tremendously in the past five years, and who knows what will happen in the future? So we must continue to work in partnership with the owners of the rights, such as the BBC and other broadcasters.</p>
<p>[57] Ms Gibson: Ochr yn ochr â'r hyn a ddywedodd Gareth a Keith, mae datblygu yn rhyngweithiol yn bwysig iawn o ran yr hyn y gallwn ei gynnig ar y we, ffonau symudol ac yn y blaen, i greu cymunedau o gefnogwyr a phlant, fel y gallant siarad am chwaraeon, boed yn bêl-droed neu gamp arall. Byddwn yn parhau i ddatblygu rhaglenni ar gyfer plant gan fod hynny'n beth pwysig iawn yn ein strategaeth eisoes. Ar wefannau <i>Peldroedio</i> a <i>Sgorio Bach</i>, mae cyfle i blant gael gwybodaeth am sgiliau a chlywed yr hyn a ddywed yr arbenigwyr.</p>	<p>Ms Gibson: Alongside what Gareth and Keith said, interactive development is very important in terms of what we can offer online, on mobile phones and so on, to create communities of supporters and children, so that they can discuss sport, whether it is football or another sport. We will continue to develop programmes for children because that is already an important part of our strategy. On the <i>Peldroedio</i> and <i>Sgorio Bach</i> websites, there is an opportunity for children to access information on the skills to see what the experts are</p>

<p>Felly, mae llawer mwy o ddatblygu yn digwydd yn y ffordd honno.</p>	<p>saying. So, there is much more development being undertaken in that area.</p>
<p>[58] Laura Anne Jones: Thank you for your presentations. It is apparent from your tri-media approach that you are moving with the times. I find it very useful, because I always listen to the radio when I access the internet, so thank you for that. I cannot watch as much football as I used to, which is a shame.</p>	
<p>[59] The questions that I wanted to ask have already been picked up. Following on from the women's football question, what about coverage of youth games and so on? I also wanted to ask about your coverage of Welsh football matches, even though we know that you must go by demand. I am a Manchester United supporter, and perhaps I should not say that, but I know what it is like—there is a big interest in English football. How are you using your position as BBC and S4C in trying to stir up the interest, profile and demand for Welsh football matches? How are you using your position to promote it, because the coverage might be there but we must increase interest for people to watch it? What are you doing on a ground level? I see that you go to some matches, and so on, but can you expand on any future ideas on how to promote the game?</p>	
<p>9.40 a.m.</p>	
<p>[60] Mr Davies: Working backwards, in terms of marketing Welsh football, as a broadcast partner, it is important that we have that responsibility, if you like, in terms of making our product stronger. It is a tough one in many ways, because of the historical aspect. Take last weekend, for example, when, on Saturday evening, we had the Welsh rugby cup final between Pontypridd and Neath—which happened to be one of the best games of the season—and, on Sunday, we had the Welsh football cup final, played in Wrexham. The audience for the rugby match, for example, was five times that for the football match. Much of that is down to history—there is a stronger competitive edge, if you like, in terms of Welsh domestic rugby as opposed to Welsh domestic football. However, having seen what has happened in the last three, four or five years on the Welsh football scene, I would like to think that things are improving. Standards are improving, as are surfaces and the way that broadcasters are approached, facilities are better, and the sides have become more and more professional.</p>	
<p>[61] Therefore, it is possibly a matter of time also, along with the fact that the clubs approach the product in a more professional manner. I mentioned in my presentation earlier that being out at clubs works—it is great if we go to Bangor, Aberystwyth, or wherever, and the cameras are there; it is a live show, and they are on television. I would like to think that that in itself will start to help sell the product—if it is on television live, then it is worth watching. This will take some time, but it is moving in the right direction.</p>	
<p>[62] Laura Anne Jones: I agree with everything that you have just said. The point of this review is to try to get as many people as we can on board, and to try to get the game in Wales up to a similar standard to that in the English clubs. That is what we all hope to do. You will obviously be on board, but do you have any future ideas on how you might help out in that regard?</p>	
<p>[63] Mr Davies: The downside, on one hand, is that you are always battling against what people see on television coming from Stamford Bridge, Anfield, or wherever. That is always a difficulty, whereas perhaps in other sports, the level is comparable. So, that is always a difficult one. I was in Nigel's seat when the league of Wales started, many years ago; in those days, it was treated as one man and a dog. It has moved on from there considerably in terms of interest, which is the point that you are making, but, more importantly, what will lead to the interest is the standard of play and facilities, and that backdrop. Therefore, it is a product that, without doubt, is improving, and we want to continue to be associated with that.</p>	

<p>[64] Mr Walker: I will deal with the youth coverage, but I will first pick up on a point that Gareth made. It is about partnership, and Gareth has referred to partnership a few times. I remember two years ago when we lost the rights, once the black cloud had lifted partially, Gareth and I had a quick chat, and we went to Sky together to try to purchase rights, whether they be secondary rights in English, or Welsh-language rights. Sky was not interested in selling us English-language rights, but, together, S4C and BBC Wales were able to purchase the Welsh-language rights. Under those Welsh-language rights, BBC Wales has made a commitment, alongside S4C, to showing at least three under-21 games live each year. We cannot show them in the English language, because Sky would not allow us to, but we are able to produce those games for S4C. Therefore, that is bringing in the youth and the players of tomorrow.</p>	
<p>[65] Without wishing to name drop, John Toshack popped into the BBC—John and I, me and John [<i>Laughter.</i>—to talk to a few of our pundits, and we had a chat. He talked about the under 21s. The score of last night’s under-21s game in Estonia—it is a two-legged affair—was 2-0 to Wales. He feels that the future of Welsh football is very bright. Together, we should help him to showcase those games at the under-21 level.</p>	
<p>[66] Picking up on Gareth’s point about the Welsh premier league, it may have been one man and a dog all those years ago, but it is steadily improving. BBC Wales has made a commitment over the last seven or eight years to the FAW Premier Cup, which is the only competition in Wales that brings together all the clubs in Wales, wherever they play. Therefore, it does not matter whether it is Cardiff, Swansea or Wrexham, whether it is our Welsh premier clubs, or whether it is the so-called three exiles, which I have mentioned before; they all get a chance to take part in this competition, and we have made a commitment that we will show at least four of those games live. Obviously, we are not doing that because we believe that it will attract the same audience as that attracted by a game between Manchester United and Liverpool, with respect, but because we believe that that is important for Welsh football.</p>	
<p>[67] Finally, BBC2W, our digital service, carries sports news every night of the week, for approximately five minutes on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, but for 15 minutes on Monday and Friday, and, quite often, we will carry reports and features about young people taking part in all sports—football is obviously included in that—and also women playing in sport.</p>	
<p>[68] Mr Jones: It is not just about the top end of the game; you will see from what you have heard and read in the evidence that the range all through the sport that we cover is important. There is also an issue of empathy with the sport across Wales, and engaging with people in different clubs and at different levels. That is the approach that we are taking.</p>	
<p>[69] Eleanor Burnham: Rhaid imi gyfaddef fod gennyf ddiddordeb mewn pêl-droed, ond nid wyf yn cael llawer o amser i’w wyllo. Fodd bynnag, yr wyf yn hoffi gwranddo ar Radio Cymru ar fore dydd Sadwrn. Yr oeddwn yn dweud hyn wrth Dafydd Huws y diwrnod o’r blaen, ac yr oedd wedi synnu, oherwydd maent yn cael ychydig o hwyl ar y rhaglen, sy’n wych. Yr wyf hefyd yn gwyllo <i>Sgorio</i> pan allaf. Mae’n andros o bwysig denu pobl ifanc a dyna’r pwynt yr ydym ni’n edrych arno’n benodol.</p>	<p>Eleanor Burnham: I must admit that I have an interest in football, but I do not have much time to watch it. However, I enjoy listening to Radio Cymru on Saturday mornings. I was telling Dafydd Huws this the other day, and he was surprised, because they have quite a bit of fun on the programme, which is great. I also watch <i>Sgorio</i> when I can. It is extremely important to attract young people, and that is the point that we are specifically focusing upon.</p>
<p>[70] Fodd bynnag, nid wyf yn deall yr ariannu a hawliau darlledu yn union,</p>	<p>However, I do not understand the funding and broadcast rights</p>

<p>heblaw am ddeall bod Sky mor bwerus; a allwch ehangu ychydig ar hynny? Byddwn yn tybio, ac efallai y gallwch gadarnhau hyn, mai'r her fawr yw'r drefn bresennol gyda hawliau darlledu a bod yn deg amdanynt. Yr ydym mewn marchnad fyd-eang, ond yr wyf yn poeni am hyn—os yw Sky yn gallu cael cymaint o fantais, sut drefn a sut ddyfodol ydych chi'ch dau yn eu rhagweld? Wrth gwrs, yr ydych yn bwerus yn y BBC, ond cydweithio yw'r ateb. Byddwn yn hoffi clywed ychydig mwy am hyn, ac am sut mae sicrhau cadernid ariannol yn y dyfodol, a sut hefyd yr ydych yn gweld yr hyn y gallwch chi ei wneud i helpu ariannu'r ieuencid sy'n cael blewyn bach o arian gan Gymdeithas Bêl-droed Cymru. Mae problem fawr; yr ydym wedi clywed gan dystion eraill fod yr ariannu'n annheg o'i gymharu â'r ariannu dros y ffin yn Lloegr.</p>	<p>completely, though I understand how powerful Sky is. Could you therefore expand a little on this? I would suspect, and maybe you can confirm this, that the greatest challenge is the current system for broadcasting rights and ensuring fairness. We are part of a global market, and I am concerned that if Sky can have such an advantage, what kind of system and future do the two of you foresee? You are in a stronger position at the BBC, of course, but collaboration is the key. I would like to hear a little more about that, and on how to secure financial security in the future, and also what your view is on what you can do to help to fund the youth teams who are on a shoestring budget from the Football Association of Wales. There is a grave problem; we have heard from other witnesses that the funding situation in this country is less advantageous than that over the border in England.</p>
<p>[71] Mr Davies: O safbwynt yr hawliau, fe'ch cyfeiriaf at yr hyn a ddywedais yn fy nghyflwyniad am yr arian a dalwyd yr wythnos diwethaf i Uwch-gynghrair yr FA i ddarlledu gemau'n fyw dros y tair blynedd nesaf. Mae'r ffigurau'n frawychus, mewn gwirionedd—dros £4 miliwn am bob gêm. Mae'n amlwg na fydd S4C yn mynd ar ôl y rheini. Felly, ar y lefel uchaf, mae pêl-droed yn mynd yn galetach, ac yn mynd bant oddi wrth bawb. Yr unig gemau rhyngwladol sydd ar gael ar y funud yw gemau oddi cartref. Felly, dywedwn mai marchnad ydyw mewn ffordd, gyda holl ddarlledwyr Prydain yn ystyried a ydynt eisiau gêm Cymru yn Azerbaijan neu ble bynnag. Ocsiwn yw hi, mewn ffordd. Mae'r BBC a ninnau'n trafod o hyd pa gemau sy'n dod, beth fyddwn ni'n ei wneud, ac a fyddwn yn gweithio gyda'n gilydd arnynt. Mae honno'n drafodaeth iach o'r safbwynt ein bod ni'n agored gyda'n gilydd.</p>	<p>Mr Davies: Regarding rights, I refer you to what I said in my presentation about the money that was paid last week to the FA Premier League to broadcast games live over the next three years. Those figures are truly startling—more than £4 million for each match—so it is clear that S4C will not be chasing those. Therefore, at the highest level, football is becoming more and more difficult, and is, in a way, getting out of people's reach. The only international matches that are available at the moment are the away games. Therefore, I would say that it is a market in a way, with all of the British broadcasters considering whether they want to broadcast the Wales away game in Azerbaijan or wherever. In a way, it is an auction. The BBC and we are continually discussing the upcoming games, what we will do about them and whether we will work together on them. That is a healthy discussion, in that we are always open with each other.</p>
<p>[72] Mae ariannu ym myd pêl-droed wedi bod yn broblem yng Nghymru erioed. Yn amlwg, dyna pam mae'r chwaraewyr gorau wedi mynd dros y ffin, a chadw i fynd, at glybiau cyfoethog Lloegr. Ni welaf unrhyw ffordd o stopio hynny. Cwestiwn i'r gymdeithas bêl-</p>	<p>The funding of football has always been a problem in Wales. Clearly, that is why the best players have gone over the border, and continue to do so, to the rich English clubs. I do not see any way of stopping that from happening. How it will fund the development of the youth</p>

droed ydyw, o ran sut y mae'n ariannu datblygu'r gêm ymhlith ieuenctid.	game is a question for the football association.
[73] Eleanor Burnham: Yr oeddwn yn gofyn a oes arian ar gael gennych chi fel darlledwyr i helpu ieuenctid. Nid wyf yn gwybod; dim ond gofyn yr wyf.	Eleanor Burnham: I was asking whether you, as broadcasters, have money available to help young people. I do not know; I am only asking.
[74] Mr Davies: Dylai'r arian y mae pob corff llywodraethu yn ei gael gan ddarlledwyr mewn unrhyw faes gyfrannu'n allweddol at ddatblygu. Mae hynny'n digwydd mewn campau eraill, ond nid wyf yn sicr beth sy'n digwydd ym myd pêl-droed yng Nghymru ar y funud, o safbwynt yr arian sy'n dod gan Sky a'r BBC.	Mr Davies: The funding that every governing body receives from broadcasters in any field should make a significant contribution towards development. That happens in other sports, but I am not sure whether it happens in Welsh football at present, in terms of the money that comes from Sky and the BBC.
9.50 a.m.	
[75] Mr Jones: Mae hynny'n gwbl wir, a bydd yr arian y sicrhodd yr uwch-gynghrair yn Lloegr yr wythnos diwethaf yn golygu bod pob clwb yn cael £28 miliwn y flwyddyn o'r swm hwnnw. Golyga hynny eu bod yn gallu talu arian mawr i'w chwaraewyr, ond pan ddaw i gymdeithasau sy'n berchen ar hawliau, mae'r arian yn dod o'r arian y maent yn ei gael gan y darlledwyr am yr hawliau. Ni allwn ni ariannu pobl yn uniongyrchol o arian cyhoeddus. Yr hyn y gallwn ni ei wneud—ac y mae'n ddyletswydd arnom i'w wneud—yw talu yr hyn a ystyriwn i fod yn bris teg. Yr ydym wastad yn gorfod anelu at hynny, gan wasanaethu nid yn unig y bobl sydd â diddordeb mewn pêl-droed ond hefyd y nifer o bobl eraill yn ein cynulleidfya sy'n talu'r drwydded. Mae'n ddyletswydd arnom felly i farnu ymlaen llaw yr hyn a ystyriwn i fod yn bris teg. Fodd bynnag, yr wyf yn credu bod rhywbeth y tu hwnt i arian hefyd: gall darlledwyr gynnig rhywbeth ychwanegol. Yn aml, yn ogystal â'r arian, yr ydym yn chwilio am y gwerth ychwanegol y gallwn ddod ag ef i'r gêm, ac mae hynny'n bwysig iawn, yn arbennig yma yng Nghymru.	Mr Jones: That is completely true, and the funding that the premier league in England secured last week will mean that each club receives £28 million a year from that sum. That means that they can pay big money to their players, but when it comes to the associations that own the rights, that money comes from the funding that they get from the broadcasters for the rights. We cannot fund people directly using public money. What we can do—and it is our duty to do—is pay what we consider to be a fair price. We must always aim for that, by providing a service not only to those people who are interested in football, but also to the many other people in our audience who pay their licence fee. Therefore, we have a duty to determine in advance what we consider to be a fair price. However, I think that there is something that is beyond money, too: broadcasters can bring something extra to the game. Often, apart from the financial side, we are searching for the added value that we can bring to the game, and that is very important, especially here in Wales.
[76] Yn olaf, nid oes gennyf gwyn o gwbl fod darlledwyr eraill, megis Sky neu bwy bynnag, yn prynu'r hawliau, oherwydd, fel y dywedodd Gareth, marchnad yw hi, ac yr ydym yn ddigon parod i gymryd rhan yn y broses o gystadlu am hawliau. Nid oes cwyn o'n safbwynt ni am y ffaith bod y gemau hyn ar Sky, ond yr ydym yn awyddus i ddangos y gallwn ddod â rhywbeth yn	Finally, I have no grievance at all that other broadcasters, such as Sky or whoever, purchase the rights, because, as Gareth said, it is a market, and we are more than willing to participate in the process of competing for the broadcasting rights. There is no complaint on our part about the fact that these games are on Sky, but we are keen to show that we can bring

ogystal ag arian at y bwrdd.	something extra, in addition to money, to the table.
<p>[77] The Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport (Alun Pugh): I just want to put my local constituency hat on for a moment, and say that the perfect result for me would be Colwyn Bay, 1—Manchester United, 0. That is beautiful from both ends of the spectrum. It will never happen in premiership football—that really is fantasy football—but it is just about conceivable that those two sides could come together through a European draw. We know that there are all sorts of complex situations behind that.</p>	
<p>[78] You mentioned the FAW Premier Cup, and I think that you said that it is the only competition in which every side of stature in Wales gets a chance to play, though there is not a European route through that competition. I appreciate that these things are not in your gift, but what would be your assessment of fans' interest in a tournament if, as well as having every side in Wales play in it, the prize of a European place was at stake for the winners?</p>	
<p>[79] Mr Walker: In terms of the BBC, it would raise interest in the competition, so it will not surprise you to learn that we have been talking about that very same issue. It is not straightforward, and it certainly is not within our gift or the gift of the FAW Premier Cup board either—it is very much a UEFA matter. I will be taking advice, and we have had many discussions, as I am sure you are aware, and it is something that we will continue to work on. Clearly, the opportunity for the winners of the FAW Premier Cup to play in the InterToto Cup or the UEFA Cup would be fantastic, but that one place would need to come from somewhere else in Wales, and therein lies the problem.</p>	
<p>[80] Rosemary Butler: Does anybody else want to come back on the Minister's question? Val, you wanted to come back on another one.</p>	
<p>[81] Val Lloyd: This is a slightly different issue, as we are coming to the end of this item. I am sure that everybody is aware—and I have my constituency hat on, too—that tonight, at the Liberty Stadium in Swansea, Swansea City FC is playing in the league 1 play-off. I want it on record, if I may, and I want to ask members of the committee, as well as the broadcasters and others present, to join me in offering the team best wishes for success.</p>	
<p>[82] Mr Walker: I would just like to make a plug. You can hear that game on Radio Wales and Radio Cymru tonight.</p>	
<p>[83] Val Lloyd: I will probably be able to hear it from my house, actually.</p>	
<p>[84] Mr Walker: We have had a reporter stationed at the Liberty Stadium since 5.30 a.m., so I am sure that he would appreciate it if as many people listened as possible, because he has been plugging the game all morning.</p>	
<p>[85] Rosemary Butler: You have made sure that everybody knows that he is there.</p>	
<p>[86] Owen John Thomas: Yn gynharach, yr oeddem yn trafod y broblem na all pobl nad ydynt yn siarad Cymraeg wrando ar y sylwebaeth wrth wyllo gemau ar S4C. Cofiaf, flynyddoedd yn ôl, y byddai rhai pobl yn rhoi Radio Cymru ymlaen ac yn rhoi'r radio ar ben y set deledu a throi sain y teledu i lawr—oherwydd nad oedd y gêm ar gael yn y Gymraeg ar y teledu bryd hynny—fel y gallasent wrando ar y gêm ar Radio Cymru a'i gwyllo ar y teledu. Os gwnewch rywbeth tebyg drwy wrando ar Radio Wales a throi'r sain Cymraeg i</p>	<p>Owen John Thomas: We were discussing earlier the problem of people who cannot speak Welsh being unable to listen to the commentary when watching games on S4C. I remember, years ago, that some people would turn Radio Cymru on and place the radio on top of the television set and turn down the sound on the television—because the game was not available in Welsh on television in those days—so that they could listen to the game on Radio Cymru while watching it on the television. If you do something similar by listening to</p>

lawr—sy'n beth ofnadwy i'w wneud, cofiawch—gallwch wylio'r gêm a chlywed y sylwebaeth yn Saesneg. Nid yw'n <i>rocket science</i> .	Radio Wales but turning the Welsh sound down—which is a terrible thing to do, of course—you could watch the match and listen to the English commentary. It is not rocket science.
[87] Cododd Val bwynt ynglyn â'r ffaith bod mwy o fenywod yn cael eu denu at chwaraeon. Yr wyf wedi sylwi yn ddiweddar—fel y gwnaeth nifer ohonoch—bod cryn dipyn o fenywod yn cyflwyno rhaglenni chwaraeon. Yn aml, pan drof y radio ymlaen, bydd Eleri Siôn yn siarad am rygbi, ac mae'n swnio'n well na nifer o ddynion wrth drafod y peth erbyn hyn. Mae datblygiadau felly.	Val raised a point about the fact that more women are being drawn to sports. I have noticed recently—as have many of you—that there are quite a few women presenting sports programmes. Often, when I turn on the radio, Eleri Siôn will be on talking about rugby, and she sounds better than many men discussing the subject by now. There have, therefore, been developments.
[88] Mr Jones: Mae'n wir i ddweud bod hynny'n digwydd gyda'n gwasanaethau Cymraeg ni oherwydd, fel y soniodd Nigel yn gynharach, mae tîm rhaglen <i>Ar y Marc</i> —sy'n sylwebwyr ychydig yn wahanol—yn sylwebu ar y gemau sy'n ymddangos ar BBC2. Mae hynny'n digwydd oherwydd bod y dechnoleg ar gael: technoleg y botwm coch. Mae gwasanaeth Radio Wales hefyd ar gael, ac felly mae'n fater o wneud yn siwr bod technoleg y botwm coch ar deledu digidol ar gael.	Mr Jones: It is true to say that that happens with our Welsh-language services because, as Nigel mentioned earlier, the team from <i>Ar y Marc</i> —who are a little different from other commentators—comment on the games that appear on BBC2. That happens because the technology is available to us: the red-button technology. A service is also available on Radio Wales, and so it is a matter of making sure that the red-button technology on digital television is available.
[89] Rosemary Butler: I am sorry to interrupt, but other people want to come in, and I cannot have a conversation back and forth. Do you want to ask one more point to finish?	
[90] Owen John Thomas: Ydw. Os yw'r gêm ymlaen ar Radio Wales yn Saesneg, mae'n bosibl rhoi'r radio ymlaen a throi'r sain Gymraeg ar y teledu i lawr. Yn y modd hwn, gallwch ddeall y sylwebaeth os nad ydych yn deall y Gymraeg. A yw hynny'n torri unrhyw reolau ynglyn â chytundebau rhwng Sky, y BBC ac S4C? A oes hawl gyda chi i roi y peth ar y radio?	Owen John Thomas: Yes. If the game is available on Radio Wales in English, it is possible to turn on the radio and turn the Welsh sound down on the television. In this way, you can understand the commentary if you do not understand Welsh. Does that break any rules relating to contracts between Sky, the BBC and S4C? Are you permitted to broadcast it on the radio?
[91] Mr Davies: Mae hawliau radio gan y BBC, felly nid ydynt yn torri unrhyw ganllawiau neu gytundebau. Yr ydym yn darlledu yn y Gymraeg yn unig, felly yr ydym hefyd yn cadw at y rheolau.	Mr Davies: The BBC has radio rights, and it is not, therefore, contravening any guidelines or breaching any contracts. We broadcast in Welsh only, so we are also keeping to the rules.
[92] Rosemary Butler: I think, Owen John, that you ought to consider compiling and publishing a little leaflet on how you can get around all of these issues.	
[93] Owen John Thomas: I will write a letter to the <i>Western Mail</i> , the <i>South Wales Echo</i> and the <i>South Wales Argus</i> .	
[94] Eleanor Burnham: Ynglyn â'r hawliau darlledu, bu ichi ddweud mai marchnad ydyw, ond, yn y pen draw, mae'n rhaid inni fod yn wylidwrus neu bydd pethau'n mynd dros ben llestri a	Eleanor Burnham: On the broadcasting rights, you said that it is a market, but, at the end of the day, we have to keep a watchful eye or things will get out of hand, and it will be

bydd yn amhosibl cystadlu neu gael digon o arian i brynu gan Sky. Mae pobl yn cwyno mai ychydig iawn y gallwn ei wneud yn erbyn pŵer mor fawr. Beth all Llywodraeth San Steffan ei wneud i gadw golwg wyladwrus ar ddatblygiadau yn y maes hwn?	impossible to compete with, or to have enough money to buy from, Sky. People complain that there is little that we can do against such a superpower. What can the Government at Westminster do to keep a watchful eye on developments in this field?
[95] Mr Davies: Gwn fod y Gwyddelod yn cadw llygad barcud ar hawliau chwaraeon. Er enghraifft, mae Cwpan Ryder yn Iwerddon eleni, a bu trafodaethau yn mynd rhagddynt dros y misoedd diwethaf oherwydd Sky sydd â'r hawliau. Bu i Sky sicrhau ein hawliau ni ryw wyth mlynedd yn ôl, ond mae'r darlledwyr a'r Llywodraeth yn Iwerddon wedi trafod y peth o ddifrif. Bu trafferthion rai blynyddoedd yn ôl ym myd pêl-droed a rygbi yn Iwerddon.	Mr Davies: I know that the Irish have eagle eyes when it comes to sporting rights. For example, the Ryder Cup is being held in Ireland this year, and discussions have been ongoing over the past few months because Sky has the rights. Sky secured our rights some eight years ago, but the broadcasters and the Government in Ireland have discussed the matter at length. There were also some difficulties in Ireland some years ago with regard to football and rugby.
10.00 a.m.	
[96] Pe bai modd rhoi unrhyw bwysau ar wleidyddion i sicrhau bod digwyddiadau sy'n bwysig i'r genedl ar gael i ni, fel darlledwyr Cymraeg, credaf y byddai pawb yn gwerthfawrogi hynny.	If any pressure can be brought to bear on politicians to ensure that events that are of national importance are available to us, as Welsh-language broadcasters, I think that everyone would appreciate that.
[97] Mr Jones: Byddwn i yn ategu hynny. Mae Deddf sy'n ymwneud â hyn o ran digwyddiadau arwyddocaol i Brydain ac S4C, ond does dim byd cyfatebol ar gyfer pethau sy'n berthnasol ac yn bwysig i Gymru, hynny yw, o ran darlledu'r digwyddiadau hynny ar deledu sydd ar yr awyr am ddim. Credaf fod lle i drafod hyn ynglyn â phethau sy'n berthnasol i Gymru ac i gynulleidfaoedd yng Nghymru o bob oedran, beth bynnag eu gallu i dalu.	Mr Jones: I would concur with that. There is an Act that is relevant to this in terms of events of British significance and S4C, but there is nothing similar for events that are significant and important to Wales, that is, in terms of broadcasting those events on free-to-air television. I think that there is room to discuss this in terms of things that are relevant to Wales and to audiences in Wales, of all ages, whatever their ability to pay.
[98] Rosemary Butler: Thank you very much for that interesting discussion. One of the main aims of this review is to try to encourage more young people to play football. Obviously, they need inspiration and quality broadcasting is part of that. If you go into local clubs, and they can see you broadcasting, that is fantastic. It would be interesting, and we might write to you later about what more you could do to encourage more young people, particularly people with disabilities, to feel that they are part of this wonderful national movement that is football. It is interesting how the national psyche is affected when there is a game like there is in Swansea, and you have an important part to play in that. Thank you for coming. You may like to stay to listen to one of the three exiles that you talked about earlier and see how you can make sure that they get their fair share of the coverage as well.	
[99] I would now like to welcome Mr Chris Blight from Newport. We invited representatives from Merthyr as well, but they chose not to come.	
[100] Ms Annand: We invited Cardiff City as well.	
[101] Rosemary Butler: Yes, but it is not one of the exiles.	

[102] We would like you to give a brief presentation and explain why you do not play in the league of Wales, and explain any aspirations that you have for Welsh football in the future, particularly Newport County. Is it Newport County? I should know.

[103] **Mr Blight:** It is Newport County AFC Ltd.

[104] **Rosemary Butler:** Of course, it is the AFC; I knew that there was something different.

[105] **Mr Blight:** Good morning to you all. I welcome the opportunity to come here today. Basically, I am a Newport businessman and I come from a background of working in Lloyds Bank, the civil service, including the British Overseas Trade Board in London and the Foreign Office, and then I came into estate agency through meeting Alan Darlow, whom a lot of you around the table have probably heard of. He brought me into the world of estate agency back in 1980. We went through numerous buy-outs and so on and were eventually bought out by the Halifax Building Society. That is a little of my history and background. I have been self-employed for the last 25 years and I think that it was five years ago that I accepted a glove across the face when I was invited by a chap of the name of Paddy Mullen to the Holiday Inn in Newport to offer some advice to what was then the board of Newport County Football Club.

[106] I will give you a little bit of the history of the club. It was once a league club that had a huge following, with crowds of between 12,000 and 25,000 at the old Somerton Park in Newport, but everything went into demise in the late 1980s. There were businessmen on the board who seemed to be fiddling around with the club. We lost the freehold ground in Newport—at that time, I had nothing to do with the club whatsoever. As a result of bankruptcy, the club tumbled some 10 leagues and became one of the exiles, which has obviously already been mentioned.

[107] Since that time, a wonderful band of people in Newport have taken it upon themselves to try to encourage a much higher standard of football back into Newport and it was at that meeting five years ago that I joined in. It was a little bit of a baptism of fire and, three years later, it resulted in my accepting the offer of the chair of the club. At the first meeting, when I learned that the club was some £200,000 in debt with absolutely no asset base whatsoever, I realised the size of the hill that we had to climb. Over the last few years, I have completely eradicated the deadwood from around the table and I have brought in some muscle. A football club is a financial institution, and the likes of Matt Southall of Acorn are on the board. I think, Laura, that you have been over there and tasted the enthusiasm that runs around the club. I think that we are starting to make some inroads. Under the auspices of Peter Nicholas, we were able to get into Conference South League. This year, we have only just managed to stay in the league: we had a rather disappointing start to the season, which led me to sack John Cornforth, the previous manager, and appoint Peter Beadle, and, in the last 10 games of this season, we had probably one of the best forms in the league, and we hope to continue that next year.

[108] So, it is really a financial uphill climb for Newport County. We are averaging a fan base of about 1,000: three years ago, we managed to get to the final of the FAW Premier Cup at Wrexham, which was a real ticket on our lapel for that competition. I thoroughly enjoyed it, and there was a financial benefit to it as well. When you speak of a possible UEFA introduction from that competition, it would certainly be the objective of many teams to be considered for that, because it is outside that premise at the moment.

[109] I am very proud that Newport County has probably one of the finest academies of its level in the country. Under Glyn Jones, who runs the academy as part of Hartridge High School, we have seen this year, once again, Newport County win the under-18s Colleges Cup, and the under-16s Schools Cup.

Unfortunately, we were dumped the other night by Cardiff City's youth in the semi-final played at the university fields in Treforest. Last year, however, I was sat alongside Sam Hamman down in Cardiff when we beat them in the final of the Youth Cup, which brought the silverware to Newport. Unfortunately, all the silverware, at the moment, seems to be through the youth, but we are really expanding on that. I went to a parents' evening the other night in Hartridge High School to present the club to parents who are anticipating sending their children—who are sports children, as there is football, golf and cricket—to that academy. The standard of applicants was extremely high, and, in fact, quite a few people who could not quite make it at Cardiff or Swansea were at that event. Once again, we are looking good for 60 or 70 new applicants to come in next year.

[110] We are the poor relation, with Merthyr, in Welsh football, especially south Wales football. We obviously want to break into league football: that is my objective. We have the conference in front of us first to get into and then out of, and then back into the league. It is a huge task, but I have never been one to back down from anything, and I am certainly enjoying it, although it is a 52-weeks-a-year job, and for 40 weekends a year, through the football season, it means that I am either down at Newport County or away at the clubs that we are visiting. To run my own business as well is quite a tall order.

[111] I get absolutely no financial assistance from anyone, anywhere, apart from the people who encourage it around the board at Newport County. The only benefits that obviously come in are from the Football Association of Wales Premier Cup, which we are very grateful for, as that helps us on the way. I think that we had something like £10,000 to £15,000 from it this year. When you are paying out between £5,000 and £6,000 a week in wages alone, and only getting something like £3,000 to £4,000 net off a home game, which is every other week, you can see the imbalance there. However, we have put on a brave face, and our wish is to promote the town. I am a bit like a stick of Blackpool rock—I have Newport running right through me, and I do not intend to give up on this until we have the success of getting back in the football league. I can see it possibly being a five or 10-year objective.

10.10 a.m.

[112] **Rosemary Butler:** Could you explain why you choose not to play in the Welsh league? That is the interesting question.

[113] **Mr Blight:** Historically, Newport County Football Club had always been part of the league system. If you look at the league today, the only place that you can go in Welsh football is to the top of the Welsh league and into UEFA. To play in the English pyramid system is a far greater objective and you must consider the size of Newport town. I compare our population to that of Wigan, which now has a premiership side. I know that it has the chairman of JJB Sports behind it, but it goes to prove what a town can do and I am sure that Newport is going to bring it back. The fan base of Newport at the time, together with the board of directors that was there at the time, did not want to go into the smaller realms of the Welsh league. If I had chaired that board at that time, and there had been an opportunity to become an exile, to go to Gloucester and play there, and eventually come back and be promoted to go back into the football league, I think that I would have made the same decision.

[114] **Rosemary Butler:** It was a very interesting time when the club lost its ground and the team would travel to Moreton-in-Marsh every other Saturday and there would be coach loads of people going from Newport. It was quite amazing. I think that the partnership with the city council and the fact that you have quite a good ground to play on is helping you.

[115] **Mr Blight:** Hopefully, they will replace it this year. Laura has seen the ground—it was a bit like playing in a sand pit this year.

[116] Rosemary Butler: I was responsible for the rebuilding of that stadium and I know every pile that has gone into it and every argument that took place about it. Thank you for your statement. I know that loads of people want to ask questions.
[117] Owen John Thomas: How would you compare the standard and support of Newport with that for the teams in the Welsh premier division?
[118] Mr Blight: You must look at the attendance figures. When we had a young Manchester United lad playing in our academy—we support an academy—and Manchester United came down, we had a crowd of 4,300. A couple of scouts are involved with Newport County football club from Manchester United. What was wonderful was that 50 per cent to 60 per cent of the people who came were youths. They came to see their idols and if Manchester United or Fulham or any of the other teams wanted to come back down to Newport again, we would get a similar sort of attendance level. Our average gate is about 1,000 people. I have been to see Newport County play Carmarthen and only 200 turned up. I think that due to what the public of Newport and the fan base expect, wherever they go they will support football, but I do not think that we would see such support at the Welsh clubs as the standard is not quite as high, possibly.
[119] Owen John Thomas: I remember when Newport had two soccer teams, Lovells Athletic FC in the southern league and Newport County in the third division south. Those days have gone. Are you confident that you can turn things around?
[120] Mr Blight: They have to come back. That is the only reason that I am part of this board.
[121] Owen John Thomas: What about Lovells Athletic?
[122] Mr Blight: I will pass on that one at the moment.
[123] Eleanor Burnham: Before we looked at this review, I had no idea about the complexity of who is who and doing what, where, how and wherefore. It has quite baffled me. Now that we have a devolved Wales and so on—I am asking with tongue in cheek to an extent—would it not be better for everyone in Wales to play in the Welsh set-up? I realise that the big issue is that we have a global market, that is, we have Manchester United and Liverpool and so on, and then we have what is happening in Wales. It just seems baffling that people cannot get together and try to do their best under the banner of Wales. But who am I to be asking these rather tricky questions? You cannot, for instance, play in the European competitions. Is that not a big disadvantage because if you were playing in the Welsh structure you could? Do you have access to other funds that other Welsh teams cannot access? Why do you continue to play in exile?
[124] Mr Blight: The club's desire in 1988, as it is now, was to play in a much larger pyramid. I would like to see the winners of the Welsh league system being drawn into the English system. The Total Network Solutions Football Club team, which is heads above any other team that is playing on a Saturday afternoon and wins year after year, only has the opportunity of going into the UEFA Cup. I would have thought that would be a bit demoralising. You can get knocked out of the UEFA Cup. You have to go through a whole season just to be able to present yourself for one game, and if you get knocked out of that, the opportunities are gone. There is no next level; there is no second level in Welsh football.
[125] Eleanor Burnham: It is such a complex issue, I am quite baffled. You are obviously doing extremely well to have your fan base, but, surely, playing in the European Cup would increase the fan base, or am I asking a stupid question?
[126] Mr Blight: The objective is to play football on 40 consecutive Saturdays throughout the season, whereas the UEFA experience will be one game, or possibly two, because you are going to get knocked out of that competition at a fairly early stage, given the standard of football that is being played.

[127] **Eleanor Burnham:** What is the answer in Wales? How do we raise the game generally and increase the fan base? This is baffling me. In the old days, you would support your local team, but, nowadays, people in north Wales, for example, are more interested in Everton, Liverpool and Manchester United than in Wrexham. We are talking about the future and the youth. How do you secure their interest in a local club? You have a youth academy, as does Wrexham. What is the secret to raising the standard of the game in Wales? Is it just about funding, or is it a more complex issue?

[128] **Mr Blight:** I think that you will find that a lot of Welsh players leave the province because of the wages. We are on the border with England, and probably half my team is currently travelling over the bridge. As a result, we are drawing players in from English clubs, because we cannot get players of the required standard to come to us from clubs such as Merthyr Tydfil FC and Cwmbran Town AFC. The standard is not there to lift us into the system, so we have to look elsewhere.

[129] **Laura Anne Jones:** I have been lucky enough to watch a couple of games at Newport.

[130] **Mr Blight:** Not enough. [*Laughter.*]

[131] **Laura Anne Jones:** There are other parts of my constituency that I have to visit.

[132] There was clearly a high standard of play there, and you were all doing your best with the facilities that you have. It was impressive. I know that you do a lot with the youth side in Newport, and work with schools in the area to encourage youth football. What are you doing in terms of football for disabled people?

[133] You touched upon the issue of trying to retain talent in Wales and keeping Welsh footballers in Welsh football and in Newport and so on. What can be done to try to do that, apart from getting more sponsorship for the club and trying to increase the wages slightly so that people might choose Wales over Wigan, for example?

[134] **Mr Blight:** Our academy is now a target for a lot of youngsters, because for those who fail at Cardiff City FC, Swansea City FC or Wrexham AFC, we are the next level. So, they automatically come to us. We have soccer schools and we entice children to attend them so that we can pick out those who could advance further in the academy. We can encourage them to get there.

10.20 a.m.

[135] There are some great success stories. Tyrone Topper, who came to us recently, has been up to Fulham Football Club to be looked at. Swansea City has also been looking at various youth players over the last 12 months. We do not seem to sit in favour with Cardiff City, but that is historic. There is a lot of work going into promoting the youth team in Newport. This year, eight of the youth players from the academy played in the first team, whether through first-team selection or on the bench. We have to fund the whole of the academy, which is predominantly sponsored by Matt Southall of Acorn Recruitment—that is where his funding comes from.

[136] **Laura Anne Jones:** Is it hard to get sponsorship? As those guys are sitting next to you, do you think that broadcasting the games helps?

[137] **Mr Blight:** Everyone in Newport is thrilled to bits when they see us on television. We get very little mention in the *Western Mail*; the *South Wales Argus* is our main media coverage. It is great when we are in the FAW Cup, as the games are shown. However, it does not help when the television audience sees just several hundred at a ground on a windy and wet night down at Carmarthen Town FC. That kicks it into a bit of a cocked hat.

[138] **Val Lloyd:** I have read that one of the problems with football at all levels is

hooliganism—and I use that in a generic sense. Do you have problems related to hooliganism at your club, and, if so, how do you deal with it? Laura touched on several questions that I was going to ask, and those questions were dealt with. However, with regard to your finances, you said earlier how pleased you were to get the broadcasting revenue, but how do you improve your club's finances? Do you have any ongoing schemes with supporters? I do not want any confidential information, just a general picture. Do you have any initiatives to engage with your supporters, particularly the communities that they come from?

[139] **Mr Blight:** Unfortunately, Newport County has suffered in the past from hooliganism. We had one instance this year in Bognor Regis, where around 100 fans chose to use the day to celebrate the unfortunate death of one of the fans years ago. It was not really nasty hooliganism; there was just a little brutishness on the day. We are well supported: there are usually a couple of hundred who go away on the buses, and there are no problems at all. However, on that particular day, it was rather sad to see that. It was quickly stamped out by the Bognor police, and we have tried to ensure that that situation will never happen again. However, I would blame Bognor, as it was warned that there might be an additional 100 fans who might want to have a drink before the game. It was the alcohol consumption that caused the problems on the day. It will not happen again, as we will not tolerate it. Sorry, what was your second question?

[140] **Val Lloyd:** It was about how you improve your club's finances.

[141] **Mr Blight:** Ninety per cent of our revenue comes from Newport businessmen encouraging other Newport businessmen to invest in the club. They get very little back from it. I secured a five-figure sum at the beginning of this week from someone who has taken an interest in what we are doing in Newport. That person wanted to offer us a sum of £10,000, which we can use as we wish. Between 70 per cent and 80 per cent of our income goes on the players' wages. We suffer because of the amount that we need to pay the players in order to keep them. I think that that is true across the board in football and rugby. So, in response to your question, this is done through sponsorship and direct introduction by the directors around the table. Only 20 per cent of Newport County's income comes through the gate.

[142] **Val Lloyd:** I also asked whether you have any initiatives to engage with your supporters and their communities, which would possibly increase the participation in many ways.

[143] **Mr Blight:** Yes. At my instigation last year, I felt that it was appropriate that the fan base should promote director attendance. We had always had one supporter-director, but we now have three, and I am sure that many of you around the table know Colin Everett, who is involved with the Assembly. Colin has made great inroads recently, acting as a glue between what was always a little bit of a closed shop with the directors, because they were always Newport financial businessman. With the supporter base coming in, we have a very vibrant clubhouse, which is very keen to make profits to put into the football club to raise the standard of the game that we play at Newport.

[144] **Rosemary Butler:** Are there any other questions? No? Thank you for that—it was very interesting. The academy at Hartridge has gone from strength to strength, and that is the way to encourage young children, who want to go there, not just to play football but to study. If you have anything to add that we have not asked you, please do so.

[145] **Mr Blight:** I have just one final thing. I went down to Treforest the other night to see the standard of the pitches, and I mentioned that you bought us a poor relation. The standard of pitches is poor in Newport; we have a stadium but it is predominantly a running track with a football ground in the centre of it, which does not always help on occasions, though the facilities are as good as we can expect at the moment at our level. You see the likes of Swansea and Llanelli

promoting 15,000 and 20,000-seater grounds, and with Newport's new ambience and the river in between, there must be the future prospect of something along those lines. If you came on a tour of Newport pitches with me at the moment, Hartridge Academy's pitch is probably the best, although it is not floodlit to play winter football from October until March. We have no facilities, and we have just purchased motorway, generated lighting so that we can tow it to a pitch to give us lighting. The standards in Newport are quite poor compared with the superb facilities at Treforest.

[146] **Rosemary Butler:** I am disappointed to hear that. You need to make an appointment to meet the leader of Newport City Council to discuss these issues with him, because there are huge numbers of football pitches across Newport that are obviously at a lower level than yours, but which are well-drained, well-used and floodlit. Perhaps you should meet the leader, Bob Wright, to discuss the issue with him. Thank you.

[147] We will break for coffee now, and you are welcome to join us.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 10.28 a.m. a 10.50 a.m.
The meeting adjourned between 10.28 a.m. and 10.50 a.m.*

Doc35

Thursday, 15 June 2006

Adolygiad o Bêl-droed yng Nghymru Review of Football in Wales

[6] **Rosemary Butler:** We will move on to the first main item this morning, which is the evidence-gathering session on our review of football in Wales. I remind you of the terms of reference of our report, which are: to review aspects of football in Wales in order to establish the future direction and priorities for the development of football in Wales; the effectiveness of the current structure supporting football in Wales, including whether it enables the delivery for all and contributes to the Welsh Assembly Government's agenda; the relationship between the Football Association of Wales as a governing body and the Football Association of Wales Trust as a development arm; and also the funding and resources available for football. We have had interesting presentations already, and I am very pleased this morning to be here in Llangollen. We have Huw Pritchard from Bangor City Council—

[7] **Mr Pritchard:** He is from Bangor City Football Club, Chair.

[8] **Rosemary Butler:** I am sorry. I beg your pardon. We have Mike Harris, Director of the Total Network Solutions Football Club—and I am sorry that I did not get a chance to meet you earlier—Brian Lawlor, north-west Wales referee officer; Joseph Furnival, commercial director of Rhyl Football Club, who is here instead of Malcolm Jackson; Richard Lillicrap, Supporters Direct; Bob Paton, chair of Colwyn Bay Football Club; and Grant McIndoe, company secretary of Colwyn Bay FC.

[9] Welcome, gentlemen. We are looking forward to your presentations. We have had papers, and the committee will have read them, so you can give us a short presentation, adding any additional information. We will take all of the presentations first, and then the committee will ask questions, if you are happy with that. Members, are you content with that? I see that you are. Who will go first?

[10] **Laura Anne Jones:** You should say 'kick off'. [*Laughter.*]

[11] **Rosemary Butler:** Thank you, Laura. Who will kick off? Huw Pritchard, would you like to start?

[12] **Mr Pritchard:** Thank you for the opportunity to come to present to the committee. It is a matter of some regret that so few clubs and organisations have taken the opportunity to be here today. I do not know whether any other clubs have submitted written evidence, but I think that this is an excellent opportunity, and I am very grateful that Bangor City FC has had the opportunity to be here today.

[13] I will talk around the paper that I submitted earlier, and it is appropriate that the Welsh Assembly Government is showing an interest in the organisation of the game in Wales. I would like to raise some questions that need to be asked without suggesting any answers. It is certainly appropriate, because the Assembly is a major funder of sport in Wales, and football, in particular, is a major contributor to the national economy and to the regeneration of our communities. There are certainly some issues of concern that make it all the more appropriate that the Assembly takes an interest.

[14] We have a national football league, which has made some advances, I would say, in recent years. I do not want to sound overly negative, but clubs such as TNS FC, Rhyl FC and Carmarthen Town FC have done well in European competitions in recent years, and we hope that that pattern continues in the forthcoming season. However, I do not think that anyone could argue that the

league is low profile. I do not think that attendances have increased significantly since the league was set up. It is openly defied by some clubs based in Wales that could join the league if they chose to, but also by clubs in leagues that choose not to get promotion into the national league. So, there is something wrong if a team wins the title of the league below, but still chooses not to take promotion. There are also large key communities in Wales that are not represented in our national league.

[15] If a measure of a nation's sporting success is its participation in international competition, there is certainly room for improvement in Wales—I think that that is the kindest way that I could put it. Our nation has not qualified for the European Championship or the World Cup since I was a small boy, whereas other small countries, such as Slovenia and Latvia, which have similar, if not slightly smaller, populations, have qualified for international competition in recent years, even though they are newly born countries emerging from all sorts of political and social turmoil. The Republic of Ireland—a country with which Wales is often compared when it comes to regeneration, economic development, and so on—has qualified four times for the finals of either the World Cup or the European Championship since 1988, and Northern Ireland has also qualified for the World Cup final three times.

9.40 a.m.

[16] It is possibly a good time, or perhaps I should say about time, to take a thorough look at other sports going through self-analysis at the moment. British tennis, I believe, is undergoing a reconstruction; Welsh rugby has done so recently, and football in the Republic of Ireland has also recently gone through a reconstruction. As I said, there are many differing opinions, some of which we will, no doubt, hear this morning, on the way forward for football in Wales and the relationship between its various levels.

[17] I have a point of view, along with my club, but I will not suggest any answers, but rather a way forward and the type of questions that should be asked. Many people will have points on the registration of players and the funding of clubs from the centre downwards. Those are all important issues, but there is a big issue that we need to consider. It would be impossible to consider improving the Welsh Premier League, for example—which is my chief area of interest—and the lot of constituent clubs in the league, without taking account of the structures and issues above and below premier league level. For that reason, I suggest that a result of these investigations should be a thorough examination of the organisation of Welsh football to be undertaken by external experts, possibly under the wing either of the Assembly or the Sports Council for Wales. External experts should be appointed through open tender and managed by a body similar to yours.

[18] There are too many conflicting interest groups—which is healthy—in the game in Wales to hope that such an investigation, managed by the game itself, would arrive at a conclusion that would be satisfactory to all, were such a thing possible in any case. Broadly, my suggestion for such an examination would be that it should assess a number of key issues affecting the game as a whole, evaluate opinions and make recommendations, which would take the game forward in a strategy that would cover perhaps 10 to 15 years into the future. The sort of issues to be examined would be the relationship between the national team and the domestic game; the managerial structure of the Football Association of Wales, particularly the size and composition of the governing body and its various committees; the funding of the domestic game at all levels, particularly the distribution of funding from the national level to premier league and its constituent clubs and of funding of the FAW Trust; the pyramid structure arrangements for promotion and relegation; the situation of exiled clubs playing in the English football system, their access to Europe and participation in other

various competitions; and nurturing, progressing and profiting from—although I thought of using the word ‘exploiting’—talented young players, who are nurtured domestically and who then often move outside Wales without the Welsh game profiting financially from them. That is to do with contracting and mentoring and so on. It should also look at the relationship between the national body, the clubs and the trust, and improving the business acumen of clubs and domestic leagues, perhaps working with existing business support organisations on issues such as improving marketing skills and developing teams of volunteers and so on.

[19] I would suggest that the investigation be undertaken through consultation with relevant football governing bodies in Wales, England and Europe, with the individual clubs and leagues, other relevant public bodies and supporters’ associations, using a variety of means such as public meetings, interviews and online fora and so on. The investigation would finally make a series of recommendations. Some of those would, inevitably, be contentious, and for that reason, again, I recommend that an independent body take the lead in driving recommendations forward.

[20] **Rosemary Butler:** Thank you. You make some very interesting points. I want to remind people that this is a review, and we will make recommendations. However, it is not an investigation or examination; it is a review of where we are with football in Wales. Who wants to speak next? Mr Harris?

[21] **Mr Harris:** Yes, I will go next. I am Mike Harris. I got involved with Welsh football through my business some 10 years ago. You have probably seen or heard the success that TNS has achieved in business and in football. I have used the Llansantffraid football club as a vehicle to market my company, and I have become very attached to Welsh football. I am Welsh by birth. I also saw an opportunity to bring some of the skills that I had in business to football.

[22] I agree with many of the points that Huw has just brought up. As you can see from my paper, although I probably have not elaborated on many of the points, some of my frustrations come from the fact that we live in the shadow of England. Albeit that sometimes it can be a help, it can be a hindrance. In football, it probably can be seen as a hindrance. However, if we managed the limited amount of moneys that we have today—and I am not saying that they cannot be improved upon—I still believe that we could make a better fist of it than we do. I will use some examples. Just as you have used the emerging nations of the eastern bloc as examples, I look at New Zealand in rugby as an example. It is a small nation, but you would probably suggest that it is the world champion by far, although, obviously, it has the same constraints as we have as a small nation.

[23] One of the things that we are hindered by is the English premiership, which has had 70 years of television advertising, with it being free early on. However, today, people clamber to pay money to English football, because of the television rights. Our system is set up in such a way that if players are potentially good enough the big clubs come in, nurture them and perhaps even move their families to England. Most Welsh-born people could probably lay claim to English identity if they so wished, especially given that the hospitals are set up on the border—all the major hospitals lie over the border in England. You may have a Welsh father and mother and be very proud of that heritage, but the fact that you were born in Shrewsbury, Herefordshire or Chester means that you can claim English identity, if scouted. With today’s profile of English football, if you are a talented footballer you will probably want to jump on the bandwagon of England rather than push the boundaries of your real nation of birth. You can see that with the likes of Michael Owen. Ryan Giggs probably signed for Wales by luck, and not by real choice. However, we do not want to go into specific individuals.

[24] Without a national structure within Wales, the long-term wellbeing of football at a national level will come under threat. The quality guys who can get picked up—the scouts look and may come in over the border—can be whisked away to

Manchester United or Aston Villa. Basically, the Welsh national team relies on the scraps from the English premiership—people who either can be emotionally dragged back to Wales or possibly think that they will not be good enough to play for England.

[25] This is why we need a very strong pyramid system throughout the whole of Wales, from grass roots to the national league, with a view that ultimately some of those players could be in the national team. This is not a transformation that will happen with one to four years of work; this is a plan that you would have to put in place strategically and invest in over many years. You need to stop the quality drain across the border, and you also need to give opportunities to the young people who live in what I call the west part of Wales, who probably cannot make the trip to Chester, Manchester or Bristol. So, if they are not picked up, they enter into their chosen career, whatever that may be—a highly professional job, or just an average job. They may have been good enough to have played professional football, but, because of where they live, they have not been given the chance.

[26] There is a lot of debate at that level and there are a lot of things that we have to put right before we can even get to that level. The Football Association of Wales is not blessed with an awful lot of money, but it does have a considerable sum of money. I have looked at the books that it submits to Companies House and there is an amount of money.

[27] The first thing that I was embarrassed by a little while ago when I went to see Alun, was that he said to me that the FAW had not presented him with a strategic plan. I have taken that back to the FAW. I was quite embarrassed for our organisation—it was said that, if there were a ludo team in Wales, it would have a strategic plan before the Assembly, but Welsh football did not have one.

9.50 a.m.

[28] Again, with that limited resource, there is a lot of duplication. I will give you an example. The FAW Trust provides a great service, I am sure, for grass-roots football, but it takes money. Most of that money is consumed in the administration of the game, but, again, every club in the Welsh Premier League has to provide an academy to get its licence, so that, if it is successful in the league, it can play in Europe. We have to put an amount of money into developing young players, whether that involves football in the community or bringing out the best in the more technically advanced players. Most clubs do not have enough money to do that correctly, and I feel that the money should be pooled. I do not think that the clubs would mind whether there was an academy system that was run on behalf of the clubs—north, south or mid—or the money that is used currently for developing all of football was put into the clubs and strongly audited. That would get rid of the officialdom and many of the bureaucrats who administer the game or the money, because at the moment the money is just consumed in wages. Either way, the clubs would not mind. However, there is one level of duplication in the FAW Trust, and tackling that would be one of the easiest things to do. I believe that the trust costs about £1 million a year to run—again, I am not advocating putting people out of work, but if it was slimmed down in terms of personnel and that money was invested in the clubs, and those clubs were then strongly audited, football in the community and grass-roots football would take care of themselves.

[29] We have over 1,000 children participating in our football programme. We start at the lowest level, which involves five and six-year-olds, so it is football in the community. From there, as they become older, you start to draw off a nucleus of higher-skilled players, but you still keep your football in the community programme going, so grass-roots football benefits and you are bringing them up from an early age. At the next stage of development, you have 16-year-olds. We have a programme in place with the local college, which has a three-year course

on which the players can develop their educational skills and their football skills: half the day is spent on football training, and half the day on academic subjects. That means that those players have a chance to become full-time footballers with our first-team clubs. Many of those lads will not make the grade, but some of those players may go to the next division down, and will be very successful, and so on.

[30] If the clubs do their jobs right, under the licensing terms that UEFA has already stipulated, and had the money and the funding to do it properly, grass-roots football would take care of itself. The people best placed to run grass-roots football are the staff in the clubs, because they are close to the people in the areas that they serve. This is where I believe that a strategic plan, with a strategic vision of how Welsh football could improve, comes in. It should not be just for the very top level, but should include, first, how the clubs can make enough money to grow the programme, secondly, make sure that the national league is seen and recognised as a credible vehicle for people to play in, whether that is at semi-professional or professional level, and, thirdly, it should cover grass-roots football.

[31] Today, I believe that an amount of money is handed over to the FAW, which it is happy to receive, but because it cannot see a way of making that enough to do everything, it concentrates on the national team. A golden opportunity was missed when England was drawn in the same pool as Wales for the World Cup qualifiers. The main criterion for the television contract was money. At the sacrifice of probably a few hundred thousand pounds, the FAW could have put a stronger stipulation in the contract with BSkyB to put our national league games on the television, in prime spots, on one of the Sky Sports channels. They were desperate for that England game, but what happens is that you get only one shot at that game. They were prepared to pay that money, just because they wanted the television rights and, hence, our rights got pushed down to S4C. I do not mean any disrespect to S4C, but a lot of the viewers want to be able to listen to the commentary in English, because they are not all Welsh speakers and no subtitles are provided. Also, the viewing of that channel is very much restricted to Wales. If the game had been used as a lever for our games to be shown on the Sky channels, which are beamed out not just to Wales, England and Scotland, but all around Europe, our game would have been exposed at a national club level to all the different countries. What it would really have done would be to force secondary spend on the clubs—all of a sudden, the value of the shirt sponsorship of each club playing would probably jump from £5,000 to £10,000, or possibly from £25,000 to £50,000.

[32] The secondary spend around the ground, such as on advertising hoardings, would go from perhaps a few hundred pounds to many thousands of pounds. So, I am suggesting that that strategic plan needs to be known and lodged with the FAW. There needs to be some vision behind Welsh football that is more than what I would call today's Welsh national team supporters' club, with people who can find ways to generate more money than is in the current pot.

[33] I will finish with this final point. The money that was used to build their nice, brand-new premises could have been used for several things, one of which was infrastructure within the grounds of the clubs that play in the Welsh Premier League. We did not dispute the need for better premises, but why use all the money on that? They could have moved the headquarters to a number of places, using no more than a slice of the money, and invested some of it back into the infrastructure of the clubs. That is one of the reasons why I resigned from the board. I could not work with people who used money just for their own gains, without pushing it down the system as well. That is probably me in a nutshell. I hope that I have shed a little light on some of the frustrations that we are having within our organisation.

[34] **Rosemary Butler:** Thank you, Mr Harris. You are probably a coconut, rather than anything smaller.

[35] **Mr Furnival:** I will go next, Madam Chairman. My name is Joe Furnival and I am a club official with Rhyl Football Club. My role is as the licensing and administration officer, liaising with the Union of European Football Associations on European matters. I am happy to have the opportunity to present our club's views to you. Before I start, most of my comments are more down to earth and more pertinent to the Welsh Premier League and, to put a roof on everything that I say, I announce that the Football Association of Wales is a limited company. One person holds 79 shares, one holds 20 shares and there is one other preferential share. I just use the word 'democracy'.

[36] You have no doubt seen our bullet-point presentation, and I will elaborate a little on it. I completely agree with what Huw, and Mike from our rivals at TNS, have said, particularly about grass-roots football. We say at the outset that there must be clearly defined and accountable objectives. We list four in our bullet points: funding, a review of the support to the premier league, a complete structural review and improvements in communications, upwards and downwards.

[37] On the matter of funding, Mike has mentioned television. For the games that you see on S4C every weekend, the clubs get nothing directly. We get nothing whatsoever for those appearances. Those of us fortunate enough to get to the top of the tree in Europe for the last several years need extra support for travelling, ground maintenance and so on. Another thorny issue, because of the great distance involved, is the costs of officials. One club that I have been to recently had an income at the gate of £243, and their officials fees were £419 for that match. That is ludicrous and nonsensical. The argument put up by the referees—my great friend Brian will, no doubt, elaborate on it—is that it is vital for south-Walean referees to travel to the extremities of north Wales for experience, and likewise the reverse. In my humble opinion, that is baloney. Clubs do not care where referees come from, only that they all sing from the same hymn book. If there is a need for this as part of referee development and training, it should surely be funded by the football association. It is not the club's problem.

10.00 a.m.

[38] In terms of the recruitment and standard of the officials employed as staff, we have very good relations with the premier league, particularly John Deakin and Andrew Howard. There is a patent lack of professionalism within the FA. At the end of last season, the FA, in its wisdom, decided to advertise for a commercial director at premier league level—something that is so important. Nothing happened. When we queried it and did the usual back-hand inquiries, we found out that they had many applicants, but the standard was too high. It is our opinion that, in football in Wales, nothing is too high for us; we are on the world stage. It was then said that the FA would take over the role and that it would employ a commercial director; that did not happen. The reason for that was again financial. It might also be worthwhile for you to know that my club, along with many others, has a confidentiality agreement with the FA. If we speak out of turn, we will be fined. I have had a threat this year. So, our hands are tied.

[39] On financial help for academy costs, in total last year, Rhyl received around £6,000 from various FA sources—the trust and so on. I have done a minor investigation into starting an academy next year. The cost of employing one coach and the costs of facilities would be in excess of £45,000 per year. That is for a basic academy, if the costs had to be met by the club. We cannot do that.

[40] With regard to the effectiveness of the present structure in Wales, it is far too complex, and its very nature hinders effective communication. It is our view that the FA needs an injection of new ideas and new highly trained personnel. UEFA money is available; I slightly disagree with my friend Mike on that one. The

hat trick money that Mike mentioned could have been more effectively used, though we have no complaints about the way that it was used, because it was legal and above board.

[41] Again, on the commercial director point, we appointed one this year. We have a full-time commercial director, who is a top professional. He generates more money for Rhyl than the FA generates at premier league level for its clubs. However, although we generate this income, we are still short of money.

[42] The football league throughout the principality, does not encourage clubs to express their views in any way; it is a closed-shop. Many of my colleagues and I—as I have said—have had to sign confidentiality agreements. It creates apathy and misinformation being passed through back-doors to the press. We are far too top-heavy; we have seven associations, seven league structures, 29 councillors, five statutory committees, and the list goes on and on. I do not have time to list them all; and you think that politics is bad. It needs a top-to-bottom review, and reviews cost money. We say that the money is available from UEFA.

[43] On effective communication, how do people think we all felt at the opening of the new FA premises, when Leonard Johansson said, in a nutshell, 'Get your act together; the other 51 associations in Europe have done so'? It was disgusting, and I am surprised that the press did not make more of it. The Welsh Premier League is a sick league; no-one would deny that. If professional and semi-professional football is to survive within Wales at European levels, action has to be taken sooner rather than later. The more progressive clubs—in which we would include our club and Mike's, Llanelli, Carmarthen and particularly the clubs in the north and in the border areas—are, more than ever, monitoring the English system as an alternative. This, of course, is not possible today, but whenever the leading Scottish duo of Celtic and Rangers take on the FA through the European courts, and they are allowed entry, I fear that—as a born and bred Welshman who has spent his life in Welsh football—many of us will follow the same route. There must be intervention; otherwise, Welsh soccer, down to the grass roots, will certainly decline.

[44] I will finish by saying that this is the first occasion that I know of in the last five years where anyone has listened to us and had a look at us. I welcome it very much on behalf of Rhyl Football Club. Thank you very much.

[45] **Rosemary Butler:** Thank you.

[46] You are all very good on time; it must have something to do with knowing that you have so many minutes to score so many goals.

[47] Let us move on to Colwyn Bay and come back to the other matters. Can we deal with the football clubs first, and then come back to the others?

[48] **Mr Paton:** Thank you, Madam Chairman. It would be just a waste of time to say what I was going to say, because these three chaps have said more or less everything about the premier league. I am the chairman of Colwyn Bay Football Club, and Grant is the company secretary.

[49] I will give you a brief history of my involvement with Welsh football, and then move on to Colwyn Bay, which plays in the English system. Grant will then give you the history of the club as its has been up to date.

[50] As Brian Lawlor knows, I was involved with Llandudno football club for 15 years as its chairman. We built that club up from playing in a park to playing in a stadium, and made it a very lucrative club at the time, and which has always been on the fringes of breaking into the Welsh Premier League. I did 15 years at Llandudno, and we made it a successful club. After finishing there, I did 12 months at Cemaes Bay, where I tried to sort out the financial situation after it had finished in the League of Wales. I was successful at Cemaes Bay; we got it back into a club which was playing in grass-roots football, basically, and it will probably never move on from that, or maybe move on from that. Then I did

<p>another 12 months at Conway United, which had been in the Welsh Premier League. I failed at Conway: I could not do anything with that.</p>
<p>[51] After that, I moved on to Colwyn Bay three years ago. When I went there, Colwyn Bay was over £200,000 in debt. We have turned that debt around now, and Colwyn Bay is financially quite sound at the moment. The only organisation that Colwyn Bay owes money to is the Inland Revenue, which is a small amount, at the moment.</p>
<p>[52] Rosemary Butler: They are the only ones who can send you to jail. [<i>Laughter.</i>]</p>
<p>[53] Mr Paton: That is right.</p>
<p>[54] That is basically, over the last 26 years, my involvement with Welsh football. I moved on to Colwyn Bay to try to sort out the mess, and we have done it again there. I do not want to go down the same avenues, because I agree with every one of these chaps. I know who they all are, and they are right. Probably, that is one of the reasons why Colwyn Bay will not move back into the system. Grant will now give you the history.</p>
<p>[55] Mr McIndoe: We have been involved in the English system since 1984 at Colwyn Bay, and we attained Northern Premier League status in 1991—the same time that the League of Wales was formed. The board at that time gave the people of Colwyn Bay the opportunity to decide whether they wanted the team to go into Wales or to stay in the English pyramid system. It was an overwhelming verdict to stay in the English pyramid system, and that is where we have been ever since. Of course, we had the court case against the FAW, which, fortunately, Colwyn Bay won. We did not get any money from it, but we won. It cost a bit of money, but we have moved on from there. As Bob says, we have had the bad times, recently, but now the club is on the up. We enjoy playing in Wales, although we play in the English system. The areas to which we travel are in the northern part of England, so, with the infrastructure of the motorways, getting to and from the games is pretty easy—probably better than travelling to south Wales. [<i>Laughter.</i>] So, that is one of reasons why we stay in the English system. That is all that I have to say.</p>
<p>[56] Mr Paton: May I just come back on another point, Madam Chairman?</p>
<p>[57] Rosemary Butler: Certainly.</p>
<p>[58] Mr Paton: Now, we have gone through Colwyn Bay, we have been talking about the Welsh Premier League, and some people probably know that I am vice-chairman of the Cymru Alliance, which is tier 2 of the pyramid system. I have been vice-chairman now for 12 years.</p>
<p>[59] The chap from Bangor mentioned that clubs are not coming up into the Welsh Premier League; that is a fact. Clubs in the Cymru Alliance just cannot afford to move up. Over the last three or four years, we have had Llangefni and Llandudno knocking on the door, with ambitions to get into the League of Wales. Last season, Flint was showing an interest in going back in, but, to be honest, the rest of the clubs just cannot afford, and are not strong enough, to get up into the League of Wales. We had a grant last year of, I think, £70,000 or £80,000 which we had to spread between 18 clubs.</p>
<p>10.10 a.m.</p>
<p>[60] They are not going to get the facilities that are required by the league of Wales, so, until Llandudno or Llangefni get into the top two, there will not be anybody coming up from the north or mid-Wales area. Flint may have started to show an interest, but it is just too much for them. The stepping stones are miles and miles apart, and every season it just gets worse and worse in terms of catching up.</p>
<p>[61] Rosemary Butler: Right. We will take our two final presentations before I open it up. Who is going first?</p>

[62] **Mr Lawlor:** I will go first, if I may. My name is Brian Lawlor; I am from Holyhead and I am speaking on behalf of the North Wales Coast Football Association. Since this has been about the Welsh Premier League, I will say that I am a great supporter of the league, having been a referee for it since its inaugural season in 1992. Prior to that, I was a referee on the northern premier football league, on which Colwyn Bay gained a place in 1991. So, I have every admiration for the gentlemen in this room. I am a great admirer of the progress that the clubs have made in Wales in terms of the way in which they have improved stadiums, their standards all round and their professionalism. It is hard work in terms of the travelling that they do and the costs that they incur. However, my remit this morning is to speak on behalf of the North Wales Coast Football Association.

[63] The association is one of six associations in Wales directly affiliated to the Football Association of Wales, as the national governing body. It has a membership of approximately 350 clubs at adult, youth and junior levels. Those clubs are all members of leagues affiliated to the association. The North Wales Coast Football Association has therefore delegated responsibility for the overall development and administration of the game within the boundaries of the North Wales Coast Football Association.

[64] The North Wales Coast Football Association has, as part of its brief, responsibility for the recruitment and training of referees within its boundaries. To enable the leagues and the clubs to be properly served by qualified match officials, the North Wales Coast Football Association is committed to the following: increasing the level of recruitment for referees; attracting and retaining junior referees; improving the retention of referees; providing quality coaching for referees; supporting the career development of referees; promoting the laws of the game to clubs and players; identifying clubs' and players' expectations of referees in order to provide ongoing training and support for trainers and assessors of referees; providing opportunities for ladies; and raising the profile of referees in general. Football needs qualified referees and recruitment is vital. The North Wales Coast Football Association is dedicated to all aspects of refereeing.

[65] I thank you for the invitation to come here this morning. It is nice that you have invited the referees to be here among the clubs, and I am sure that they are pleased to see me here. *[Laughter.]*

[66] **Rosemary Butler:** I am sure that we will have quite a few questions to ask you later on, Brian. Finally, we have Richard Lillicrap.

[67] **Mr Lillicrap:** Thank you for this invitation to speak on behalf of Supporters Direct. I am Richard Lillicrap. I am the founder member of the Swansea City Supporters Trust, and I am also here as an elected director of Supporters Direct. I am a bit of a wildcard speaker today; I looked at the background papers and committee minutes to see where Supporters Direct might fit into any restructuring and found that the simple answer is that we do not. We have had little or no contact with the League of Wales, so I will not be able to speak to that topic either. Therefore, I will speak about Supporters Direct, what it has done and what it could do.

[68] I will refer to the briefing papers. I apologise for the typos in them; please take it as a reflection of an organisation that is suffering an excess of demand rather than an inability to spell.

[69] **Rosemary Butler:** We are all looking to see what the typos are now. *[Laughter.]*

[70] **Mr Lillicrap:** Supporters Direct delivers its services directly to supporter groups at club level. That is in response to requests. It is not a push-down service; it is a service that is pulled in by those groups of supporters who wish to avail themselves of this service. The trust model is that we would then encourage the supporter groups to form a supporters' trust. The basic trust model is the

same throughout. It is an industrial and provident society, which is a classic structure for a co-operative or social enterprise group. The key elements are that: it is accountable through annual elections, on the basis of one member, one vote; it is democratic and will involve its members in key decisions; it is open in that it is transparent and tells people what it is doing in its activities and objectives; and it is inclusive, so that its prices are at a level that is affordable to all.

[71] What we have found in England, and to an extent in Wales and Scotland, is that, from one in 2000, there are now 142 supporter trusts throughout the UK, 12 of which own their football clubs, 61 of which hold an equity stake in a football club, and 41 of which have representation at board level for supporters. We have found that trust involvement in a club has led to financial stability, an increase in participation—either through higher numbers at the gates, or people who are just interested in other club activities—and outreach into community activities and youth development. Perhaps at least as important as those is the development of partnerships with other community-focused agencies. These other bodies or agencies, among which would be the local authority and the local education authority in particular, can understand a trust, and can do business with it. However, these things mainly happen because the members of those trusts are the people who really care about the club.

[72] Therefore, our belief and experience is that a vibrant community club is one key to being able to develop the game, and to bring people in at a local level. Participation increases, and then it becomes easier for agencies, such as the FAW Trust, to link in with the club at that level. Our friends who are present from the clubs will probably take me up on that point—we shall see.

[73] One of the best examples of this is just across the border at Telford United football club, which was supported by a high-profile businessman—he was not as talented as Mr Harris, clearly, because it went badly wrong, and the club went straight out of business. The supporters regrouped to form a club from scratch, with a strong partnership with the local authority, and have built, in two years, an extraordinary model of a community-based club. I believe that they are two or three divisions below where they were before, but they are bringing in larger crowds than they were before.

[74] Finally, we have activity in Wales; I will remind the committee of what has happened with Supporters Direct here. There are established trusts at Swansea City, Newport County, Wrexham, Merthyr Tydfil and Abergavenny football clubs. We have received enquires from Haverfordwest County Football Club, and from Barry Football Club. We had an enquiry from Barry Town Football Club, but by the time that we got there, it had disappeared from sight. We also have rugby trusts—I do not see why we cannot talk about rugby at a football review—and the model works equally well with a rugby town or community. We have rugby trusts at Newport and Cardiff rugby clubs. We are talking with the Llanelli Scarlets, and we have an enquiry in from Pontypool.

[75] Again, thank you for this opportunity to present. We have a low profile in the corridors of power in Wales. There is a place for a Supporters Direct Wales in the future, which can do a good job in assisting to bring community clubs to the fore, which will bring its own rewards in bringing the game—be it football or rugby—into a healthier state for the future.

[76] 10.20 a.m.

[77] **Rosemary Butler:** Thank you, gentlemen. You all gave very interesting presentations. The Members are chomping at the bit to ask you questions. However, there is one particularly controversial point on which I will not allow discussion, and that is Grant McIndoe's suggestion about the north-south roads. [*Laughter.*] It would be very helpful if we could keep off a discussion about the road system this morning. Members have indicated that they wish to speak. Lisa,

would you like to start?
[78] Lisa Francis: I wanted to ask a question about refereeing. How is the training and development of referees funded? I will ask a series of questions, if that would be helpful.
[79] Rosemary Butler: Yes.
[80] Lisa Francis: On one of the comments made by the gentleman from Rhyl Football Club, you said that you thought that UEFA could carry out a full review, because, if I understood you correctly, you felt that the football league did not encourage clubs to air their views, that things were very much a closed shop, and that the organisation was top-heavy. How do you envisage that UEFA could carry out a full review, and what sorts of things should it start with? I know that is a leading question in a way, and that there is perhaps a lot to come back with, but can you list a couple of bullet points about how it might work?
[81] Mr Furnival: One of the problems that we face within the family of the FA in Wales is that I get the feeling from the meetings that I have had with UEFA that it is perhaps a little bit fed up with us, and is saying, 'What is wrong with you in Wales; you are one of 52 football associations, but you are the only one that does not conform or leaves it until the last minute and then grumbles?'. I will give you an instance that will perhaps highlight this. In terms of the law of our land—which Mike knows far more about than I do, in terms of the financial aspects, form-filling, tax and everything to do with governmental regions—we accept that there will be a certain level of accountancy. We are fortunate that one of our directors is an accountant. At the moment, UEFA will not accept that for European entry. This season, we were forced again to hang on until three weeks ago, and we were then threatened on a Tuesday morning with a fine of 10,000 Swiss francs if we did not have an independent private audit done by an independent company by the following Friday. We have not received the bill, but we have been told that it will cost us between £6,000 and £6,500. That is just for one club to represent Wales in Europe. The FA held its hands in the air and asked, 'What are we to do about it?'. This is where we think that there is a lack of professionalism within the FA. It is not for me to criticise individuals' appointment, because if you look at the qualifications of some of the people that it has, you will see that they are ordinary working folk doing the best that they can in the jobs that they do, and we do not criticise them. However, in terms of football at our level, where we administer teams with wages of around £4,000 a week, and certainly at Mike's level, with a multimillion pound, full-time professional football team, we cannot be administered within our clubs—we like to think of ourselves as professionals—by people who, quite frankly, at times, do not understand the language that we use. Mike has had many fall-outs with it over this, and it cannot go on. If you, as leaders in our principality, want to ensure the future of football in Wales, with respect, you must do something about it. We know about the difficulties with communication in Wales—Mr Collins is not the most forthright of communicators, as you are well aware. My colleague—
[82] Rosemary Butler: I am sorry, but you cannot assume that, so I would rather you did not say that we are aware of that.
[83] Mr Furnival: I apologise for that, but you will be aware that there have been stand-up arguments on the streets between one of your colleagues and the gentleman concerned. There are no effective communication lines, and this is what should be improved, to answer your question.
[84] Rosemary Butler: I think that you, or someone, made the point that there could be money available in UEFA for a review, so perhaps we could pursue that at another point.
[85] Lisa Francis: My other question was on training for referees.
[86] Mr Lawlor: On the money for the training of referees, each of the six

associations in Wales receives an annual set figure from the Football Association of Wales to go towards the training and recruitment of referees. The six associations receive the same figure.

[87] **Val Lloyd:** I will make an overall comment first. Having listened very carefully, it seems to me that the concerns raised by the club members here—and obviously two of you have a slightly different perspective—echo the same concerns of two or three clubs, which have contacted me, and which are worried about funding and facilities and the lack of transparency with a certain organisation. I have heard concerns here and from people outside. I will start with that.

[88] In addition, I would like more information on youth development, which is the absolute crux of how we are going to maintain the game. In addition, Mr Harris, in page 2 of your paper, you talked about defining the shared vision. How have you engaged your supporters to develop that vision? Moving on to Mr Lawlor, how are you working to increase the participation of women in refereeing? I noticed that that was one of your mission statements. Will you also elaborate on the barriers that people encounter when they are trying to take up refereeing?

[89] **Rosemary Butler:** Who is going to start? Mr Harris?

[90] **Mr Harris:** I would be happy to. My comment on the shared vision was based on the fact that the chief executive, or whoever owns football in Wales—and, at this moment in time, it is Mr Collins—needs to have a plan and that plan needs to be shared with people, whether that plan is, 'Let us compete', 'Let us break even' or even just 'Let this be a gentleman supporters' club of the national team'. The shared vision should be outlined, and the goals and objectives laid down in an agreed timetable of achieving things, whether that is obtaining a national qualification within 10 years to get to the World Cup or to the European Championships and so on. A cohesive plan is needed.

[91] On a number of occasions, I have tried to get to the bottom of how funds are spent. I sold a multimillion pound business to BT last back end. I had 100 employers working for me and their expenses over a year—and we are talking about a national sales company with some international sales—amounted to some £300,000. I got the FAW accounts, by one way or another—and not from Companies House, because it does not publish all the pages—and, from memory, I saw around £1.6 million or £1.9 million-worth of expenses. In an organisation of 20 to 30 people, if that, I must ask myself how that amount of money can be spent on expenses. Is that just under that one column? I am thinking that that £1.9 million could do a lot of good in our league; it could also do a lot of good in youth development. I looked at the top-line figure, and there was between £3.5 million and £5 million coming in, yet there was no cost of sale and no product that it has to buy. That is quite a lot of money that you could do something with, albeit that it is nowhere near what the English FA gets.

[92] However, again, my view of shared vision is that all the stakeholders and supporters of Welsh football, whether at grass-roots level, the pyramid system, at amateur level, or the national league level, and the national game level need to buy into a common plan. Those stakeholders may say, 'We just want to have an existence, and play some park football'. Well, so be it—the FAW then provides that vision. If people agree and buy-in to that, a timescale to achieve those things then needs to be agreed. I have here a long list of non-achievements. No national team has been in a national final since 1958, which we have already picked up on, although I cannot remember that far back, as I was not born.

10.30 a.m.

[93] If I look at everything else, what achievements will I see that Welsh football has made? Effectively, what we need is the vision and the goal, and for them to be transparent. People do not mind mistakes being made. Do not get me wrong—

I make mistakes every day of the week, but I hope that the right decisions that I make outweigh the wrong ones. In the current situation with the FA, there is no communication. People do not mind people failing provided that they tell them openly what they are trying to do, and then, effectively, a failure can be accepted. When there is no information available, because it is guarded and held back, the natural human instinct is to think that something is wrong, even when perhaps nothing is wrong and it is just a case of miscommunication. So, I ask for transparency and buy-in from the stakeholders; that is what I meant by my shared vision. I hope that that answers your question.

[94] **Mr Lawlor:** I will go on to my side of the question, which was about the increased participation of women within refereeing circles. Women's football is increasing rapidly in popularity throughout the world. It has increased in popularity in every country that we are talking about, which means that we need more women referees involved in the game. How do we go about that? What we have done on the north Wales coast is welcomed women on to open courses, but it was brought to my attention that ladies might like a course of their own, a ladies-only course. So, because we were not really getting women involved, we decided to do this, and a course was set up at Colwyn Bay leisure centre, with a promise of six ladies attending. However, on the evening, no ladies turned up; we just had the instructor there on his own.

[95] We were then asked to go to Kinmel Bay Football Club to hold a ladies' course for the people involved there—ladies' football is very strong there. So that was what we did. One of our senior instructors in north Wales went along on a Sunday and held the refereeing course with nine ladies, I think, on the course in Kinmel Bay.

[96] A lady attended an open course of ours at Bangor. After she had completed the course, she was interested in taking up refereeing, so we had her put on a mentoring scheme for three months, where I had her running the line as an assistant referee. In the first game that she refereed, which was a junior game, I arranged for two senior referees to be linesmen for her, and that helped her immensely. We have mentored her. This year, that lady refereed the Football Association of Wales's Women's Cup Final, between Cardiff City FC and Pwllheli FC at Caersws. She is the first lady to referee any national final in Wales, and everyone should be proud of that.

[97] Two ladies have been invited to take the fitness test next week for next year's Welsh Premier League. It is only an invite to take the fitness test; there is no promise of a place in the league, but, during the 2006-07 season, we will hopefully, and very likely, see the first woman appear in the Welsh Premier League as a match official. We are working on it, and we know that it is required.

[98] **Rosemary Butler:** Do you want to comment on the same point, because we need to cover the youth?

[99] **Mr Pritchard:** My point is to do with the development of youngsters.

[100] **Rosemary Butler:** Sorry, I just wondered whether Brian wanted to make any point on youth development, and then we will move on.

[101] **Mr Lawlor:** Is it the development of the juniors? On youth development, one of our big aims is to attract youngsters into refereeing. It is a difficult area to bring youngsters into without having them cared for and looked after by senior officials. The point that I made in my paper was about the fact that there are so many refereeing societies—we have five in the north Wales area of the Referees' Association. Youngsters are actively encouraged to attend the courses, and we try to get them looked after. We are really lucky in north Wales at the moment, because we have youngsters between the ages of 16 and 19, maybe six or seven of them, who are showing great promise for a great future in refereeing. We have been to schools, placed posters in leisure centres, and so on, to try to get youngsters involved. Obviously, we are aware of child welfare protection issues,

and we have a child welfare scheme on the north Wales coast. I will just give an example of how I worked one day when two youngsters came off a course. I phoned both parents and arranged to meet them, with the two youngsters, at a set location, which was the Talardy Hotel at St Asaph. I met both the parents there and took the two youngsters with me to a game. A referee refereed the game and I was on the touchline with them to monitor how they had done during the game. I then returned them to the same venue for their parents to pick them up. That is the type of thing that we have to do to take care of them. If we are seen doing that type of thing, hopefully, more youngsters will get interested and will take up the game. We have seen that happen, because sometimes friends will talk to each other in school, and young people have come to us through following courses, so we are working with youngsters, which is important for the future of refereeing and football.

[102] **Mr Pritchard:** I wanted to make a point about the development and nurturing of young footballing talent in Wales, and to pick up on Mike's earlier point. We have talked about the links between the FAW Trust, the schools and the clubs and so on, but when clubs identify and take on a promising young player, if the player is of a sufficiently high standard, the likelihood is that he will move on to a higher level of football, whether in Wales, outside Wales or elsewhere in the world. That is what happens wherever you are in Europe or the rest of the world. A young player will aspire to a higher level. When that happens—and this ties in to my earlier point on improving the business acumen of clubs—clubs are supported to put appropriate contracting arrangements in place so that, if a player moves on, the club that has nurtured him and brought him along will not lose out or end up with nothing. Arrangements for future transfer deals are also put in place, so that, if a player that TNS has lost, for example, progresses to the English league and the Premiership, arrangements are put in place to ensure that TNS continues to profit. Perhaps TNS already does that, but my feeling is that other clubs possibly do not.

[103] **Mr Harris:** Perhaps I can help you there, Huw. The system that you talk about is already in place. If you have a player who is under 24 years old, whom you took on from the age of eight to 16 and who then goes on to sign full-time terms for any other football club, you are due compensation under the Bosman ruling. However, it is the club's duty to prove what it did for that player. So, if a club has organised itself correctly and keeps a database of every player who comes through and his training sessions, and if that player then appears anywhere else in the world on a full-time contract, the club is due compensation. Likewise, with the older players who are aged under 24, provided that you have offered them a new contract within six weeks of the end of their old one, and as long as that contract is of the same or greater value than the one in the previous season, the original club is due compensation from the club that takes that player. So good administration at a club is key to holding on to its assets—as with any business.

[104] **Mr Pritchard:** Thank you very much, Mike.

[105] **Rosemary Butler:** Does anyone else want to comment on youth development?

[106] **Mr Furnival:** On the issue that Michael has just spoken about, UEFA has made a new rule. Under its licence requirements for this initial year, for clubs participating in the UEFA Cup, they must have four home-grown players. The two criteria for being home-grown players are that the player was trained in the club or in the association of which he was a member—in our case, the FAW—between the ages of 15 and 21. Next year, that increases to six and then, for the following year, it increases to eight, which is the top. So, that will force clubs to keep records. Last night, I was trying to trace the background of some of our 28-year-old players, to see who they played for when they were 15. That comes from the

fact that there were no proper databases in the past.	
[107] Rosemary Butler: Thank you, but the point really is how we get players to the level that you are now discussing. Rather than open up that discussion, anything that we could have on paper about how you develop grass-roots talent would be very helpful.	
[108] Mr Furnival: I will just point out that UEFA produces <i>uefadirect</i> magazine and <i>Grassroots Football Newsletter</i> monthly. A great deal of the information that is in there applies to us in Wales now.	
[109] Rosemary Butler: Yes, but we are particularly interested in what the clubs are doing, because glossy magazines pick up the best and we are looking for best practice, which has not been featured. Several Members want to ask questions, and Owen John is next.	
10.40 a.m.	
[110] Owen John Thomas: Byddaf yn siarad yn Gymraeg. Yr oedd sawl un yn cymharu Cymru â gwledydd eraill megis Iwerddon, Latfia ac yn y blaen. Ynys yw Iwerddon, wrth gwrs, felly mae ar wahân i Loegr. Yr ydym yn byw drws nesaf i'r wlad sydd â'r gyfundrefn cynghrair pêl-droed gryfaf yn y byd, mae'n siwr. Nid oes unrhyw un wedi'i chymharu â rygbi, mewn ffordd. Mae'n ddiddorol am fod llawer o rwystrau demograffig a thopograffig yng Nghymru sy'n ei gwneud yn anodd iawn i ni weithredu fel cenedl, fel y dywedwyd yn gynharach yn nhermau'r ffyrdd.	Owen John Thomas: I will speak in Welsh. Several people compared Wales with other countries such as Ireland, Latvia and so on. Ireland is an island, of course, and therefore it is separate from England. We live next door to the country with the strongest football league system in the world, I am sure. No-one has compared it with rugby, in a way. It is interesting because there are many obstacles in Wales, demographically and topographically, which makes it very difficult for us to work as a nation, as someone mentioned earlier in terms of roads.
[111] Rywsut neu'i gilydd, er nad yw'n gryf yn y gogledd, mae rygbi wedi bod yn fwy llwyddiannus na pêl-droed wrth ddatblygu'r gynghrair. Y prif wahaniaeth, wrth gwrs, yw nad oedd rygbi'n gêm broffesiynol tan yn ddiweddar. Felly, nid oedd angen rhoi llawer o arian yn esgidiau'r dynion ar ôl y gêm i'w cadw'n hapus. Nawr fod y gêm yn un broffesiynol, mae'n anos cael llawer o'r timau i chwarae ar yr un lefel fel a gaed yn y gorffennol. A ydych yn gallu gweld, drwy edrych ar rygbi, lle teimlaf fod y <i>camaraderie</i> , busnes y clwb, cymdeithasu ac ati yn uwch, er bod pêl-droed yn fwy poblogaidd na rygbi ledled Cymru, fod rygbi wedi magu rhywbeth sy'n cefnogi cyfundrefn y gynghrair nad yw'n digwydd i'r un graddau ym mhêl-droed? Ni wn a oes gwrs i'w dysgu yn hynny o beth ai beidio.	Somehow, although it is not strong in north Wales, rugby has been more successful than football in developing a league. The main difference, of course, is that rugby was not a professional game until recently. Therefore, it was not necessary to put much money in the players' boots after the game to keep them happy. Now that the game is professional it is becoming more difficult to get many of the teams to play on the same level as previously. Can you see, from looking at rugby, where I think that the camaraderie, the club's business, socialising and so on, is better, although football is more popular across Wales than rugby, that rugby has developed something that supports the league system, which does not happen to the same extent in football? I do not know whether or not there is a lesson to be learned from that.
[112] Rosemary Butler: Does anyone want to make any comments, or are you all agreeing? You have stunned them into silence, Owen John. [<i>Laughter.</i>]	
[113] Owen John Thomas: Mae gweledigaeth gan Mike.	Owen John Thomas: Mike has a vision.

<p>[114] Mr Harris: I think that the money that comes into Welsh rugby, generated through the Six Nations championship, is ploughed back into the clubs to support their infrastructure at the highest level. We, as the Welsh Premier League, have some money ploughed into our league—around £100,000—from the FAW, but the rest is spent elsewhere. So, there is a vast difference between the funding structure of rugby and of Welsh football. We would absolutely love to have the same type of funding structure at a club level that rugby enjoys from the Welsh Rugby Union.</p>	
<p>[115] Rosemary Butler: Does anyone else want to make a comment?</p>	
<p>[116] Mr McIndoe: Did Welsh rugby not bring in a troubleshooter from New Zealand or Australia to sort out its problems? Maybe Welsh football should look at doing the same.</p>	
<p>[117] Rosemary Butler: Do you want to come back, Owen John?</p>	
<p>[118] Owen John Thomas: Yr wyf yn meddwl ei fod yn dod o'r Alban yn wreiddiol. Ai am Mr Moffett yr wyt yn sôn? A ydych yn meddwl felly ei bod yn bosibl i bêl-droed efelychu'r gyfundrefn sydd gennym ym myd rygbi ac i ddysgu rhywbeth oddi wrth hynny? Hynny yw, a ydych am ddatblygu rhyw weledigaeth a strategaeth a fydd yn rhoi hwb i'r prif gynghrair, yn arbennig? A ydych yn teimlo ei bod yn bosibl, felly, i ddysgu oddi wrth y patrwm rygbi?</p>	<p>Owen John Thomas: I think that he originally came from Scotland. Are you talking about Mr Moffett? Do you think that it is possible for football to emulate the system that we have in rugby and to learn something from that? That is, do you want to develop a vision and strategy that will promote the premier league, in particular? Do you feel that it is possible, therefore, to learn from the pattern of rugby?</p>
<p>[119] Mr Harris: It is definitely possible to take that as an example of how a club infrastructure could be run using limited resources. However, the Welsh Rugby Union probably has double the funds of the FAW; I have pulled the accounts off Companies House. However, if at the very top of your organisation you have someone there who can use the money to the best of its possible deployment—is it its achievement to employ lots of people to administrate the game or is to ensure that the highest quality of players at all levels? Someone has to set the parameters.</p>	
<p>[120] Denise Idris Jones: Croeso, Huw. Mae'n neis dy weld yma heddiw—yr wyf wedi cysylltu â chi eithaf tipyn ar y cyfrifiadur.</p>	<p>Denise Idris Jones: Welcome, Huw. It is nice to see you here today—I have contacted you a lot via e-mail.</p>
<p>[121] I listened to you all and I thought that you all sounded very disillusioned. Could you say, very briefly, what you see as the way forward? What can we do to make football in Wales more successful than it is now? Maybe you, Joseph, could answer that. You have been successful with Rhyl; I hear Ann Jones telling me every Monday, as I travel down on the train, how successful you are. You, and Mike, must have some idea as to what we can do.</p>	
<p>[122] Mr Furnival: We think that there is a complete lack of professionalism at the top. It comes down to that, in a nutshell, but how you can make the Football Association of Wales change its views I do not know. One of the things that Mike referred to was the make-up of the FAW council. Without being unkind, over the years—and I talking about over 40 years—membership appointment, by the clubs in the leagues, to the FAW council, has been, in the majority of cases, a reward for services rendered. There are very few young professional people on the FAW council, and I think that that says it all. That is not to disrespect those who are there—they do what they do very well—but, and Mike also touched on this, we must get the FAW to realise that it is operating a multi-million pound business and that it must set up its structures to operate that business. I fear that the professional capability is lacking in the organisation. We deal with it every day</p>	

and, sometimes, you just scratch your head in amazement at what goes on.
[123] Denise Idris Jones: Is there any control over it? I take it that there is nothing that you can do about it, as it is a closed shop, in a way.
[124] Mr Furnival: It is a two-man organisation, basically.
[125] Rosemary Butler: Mr Harris, do you want to come in?
[126] Mr Harris: To change the infrastructure you would need the agreement of at least 75 per cent, I believe, of all the affiliated clubs, of which there are about 160, and they would then have to vote on a constitutional change. The difficult thing is that you have a lot of people in the organisation who have been rewarded for their time there and they rely on their position to be able to be involved in football. They are all well-meaning people and they put in a lot of time and effort, but, possibly, if you were looking to employ people to do those jobs, you would not employ those people, because they do not necessarily have the required skills.
[127] We have thrown this issue around a few times in our organisation, without any great consultation with the other clubs, but I have had chats with other chairmen about it. There needs to come a point at which the guys in jackets who like to go to watch the game, and nobody disputes that they should be able to, should be taken aside and told, 'You, guys, have now been voted into your positions, you have your honourable positions, so get on with it; go and watch the national team playing abroad, but bring in a small, dynamic group of people who are employees, rather than people who have been voted in, who have been judged by their strategic plans and who are given time to make it happen'. Their remit needs to be securing exposure through the media, developing and generating money, and spending the money to get the best effect according to that remit, whether that is having the national team in the World Cup or having a national premier league of x size with y funding. They should be told, 'Here is the television coverage, now go out and do it, and your grass-roots bit, all within budget'. That would require a radical reform of how the FAW currently runs things.
[128] From my limited observation, without having detailed knowledge, because you are not allowed in, I think that far too much money is wasted on salaries for people to administer the game, rather than developing it. Much more could be done with that money. You just need some clever auditing. You need to put some rules put in place, and then have a few people who insist on achieving, whether that is at grass-roots, club or national level. The sum of £1.9 million, spent on expenses somewhere, covers an awful lot of running around. I do not know what we have achieved from the spending of that money. I think that if the Welsh premier clubs were to put their hands up—I think that there are 17 this year—that money would equate to £100,000 per club, which could have gone straight into their coffers. If you were completely cynical about it, the sum of £100,000 would make a hell of a difference to a club, but what have those expenses been used for? What have they achieved? No-one can answer that. The money may have been well spent, but I am only using my judgment in concluding that 100 people with £300,000 of expenses travelling around Europe, selling, on a daily basis, for a company with a £20 million turnover is one thing, but having £1.9 million-worth in expenses for a business with a £5 million turnover, which only has 12 or 15 full-time employees, is another. Does that make sense? Where is it going?
10.50 a.m.
[129] Eleanor Burnham: It is difficult to come in at the end.
[130] Rosemary Butler: You are not at the end. There are other people to follow.
[131] Eleanor Burnham: We were told that we were opening a can of worms

that was far worse than the political scene in which we operate, and that was probably an understatement. It has been quite a revelation. My ex played some football and I had no knowledge of the complexities until we started to look into it. If you had a blank sheet of paper, how would you all start to get the whole complex organisation—which baffles me, and I am sure that it baffles everyone involved with it—simplified? If you had a blank sheet of paper, could someone show me what the organisation of football in Wales should look like? That is addressed to all of you, please. Then, I would like to know what more can we do for young people, because I used to teach, peripatetically, 14 to 19-year-old kids who were truants in north-east Wales and, mostly, they all wanted to play football, but they had no outlet, because a lot of them lived dysfunctional lives, and I got the feeling that there needed to be far more linkage into schools. Schools are too busy doing the national curriculum, and I am not criticising anyone, before I get shot, but there is so much that you guys could do.

[132] This is once you give me the blank piece of paper with what your organisation chart should look like. When I first saw it, I thought, 'My God, how does anybody work around all of this?'. For instance, on your comment about refereeing, Brian, I still cannot work that out. You referee the North Wales Coast Football Association, so, do you have anything to do with these guys?

[133] **Rosemary Butler:** Hold on, before we take the individual questions, first of all, Eleanor has asked for a blank piece of paper—

[134] **Eleanor Burnham:** An organisational chart.

[135] **Rosemary Butler:** Just hold on. She asked if you had one. I do not know if we have time for you all to give us that this morning, but it would be very helpful, if you were prepared to do it, to see how you would structure things, if you did have a blank sheet of paper. If you could send that in to us, that would be very helpful. The other one—

[136] **Eleanor Burnham:** I do not want words, Chair, I want it as an organisational chart, which Mike knows—

[137] **Mr Harris:** It needs to be more than a simplistic piece of paper with an organisational chart, because this needs a detailed discussion on which you could spend all day today and tomorrow. There are a lot of stakeholders whose views you would need to take prior to making that.

[138] **Eleanor Burnham:** Okay, the next question—

[139] **Rosemary Butler:** Hold on for a minute and listen, Eleanor. The point has been made that that is a serious piece of work. If you are prepared to do it and would like to let us have it, that would be helpful. You have made some suggestions of how it could be done this morning. The question that you can answer is Eleanor's point about disaffected youth. That would be helpful, and the other question was on Brian Lawlor's role in north-east Wales.

[140] **Eleanor Burnham:** I could not quite work out whether you referee all these people's games.

[141] **Mr Lawlor:** Three of the clubs here today operate in the Welsh Premier League—

[142] **Eleanor Burnham:** Right, who referees the others?

[143] **Rosemary Butler:** Hold on, Eleanor.

[144] **Mr Lawlor:** I referee in the Welsh Premier League, to which these clubs belong. Our friends from Colwyn Bay play in the northern premier league, and have referees from England referee their games.

[145] **Mr Paton:** That is not completely true.

[146] **Mr Lawlor:** You can answer that in a minute—

[147] **Eleanor Burnham:** Okay, because—

[148] Rosemary Butler: Let people answer the question. I know that every question that we ask is to four or five, but let us just get the answer to the refereeing question.
[149] Mr Lawlor: Bob can answer that.
[150] Rosemary Butler: Yes, can you just tell us from your point of view?
[151] Mr Paton: Brian is right that Colwyn Bay's referees come from the English system, but we also play in the North Wales Coast Challenge Cup, for which the referees and assistant referees come from the north Wales coast. When Brian was talking about the ladies' referees, the first game refereed by the girl who was mentioned was for us at Colwyn Bay.
[152] Mr Lawlor: That is right.
[153] Eleanor Burnham: So, that is another area, Chair, which probably needs to be simplified.
[154] Rosemary Butler: We do not know that, it might work incredibly well. We do not know.
[155] Eleanor Burnham: The point that I am making is that there are so many associations. Even if the referees were all working under one umbrella, rather than—
[156] Mr McIndoe: That used to be the system. Many years ago, Welsh referees refereed in the English league and English referees refereed on the north Wales coast.
[157] Mr Paton: I will just say one more thing. I agree with what Brian says, but we do not have a problem with where the referee has come from in either system. The problem is from where we will get younger referees. That is the issue.
[158] Rosemary Butler: That is the point that we raised earlier on. The referee issue is one that will arise from the paper. Are there any more points on referees, or can we move on to young disaffected youth? You have your hand in the air; I do not know whether I am being sent off.
[159] Mr Harris: One of the things that I was excited about, and why I came here today, is that you have taken the trouble to undertake a review of Welsh football. One of my concerns is that it is the minutiae of sorting out the game that is being discussed. I ask you to concentrate on the main item, which is really to look at how we sort out everything that flows out from the centre. If you sort out the top, the rest of the things start to take care of themselves. The only thing that I would say as part of that extensive discussion on everything from refereeing to the fans and so on is that the real issue that we need to get to grips with is the £4 million to £5million that comes in and is administrated for us. If you look into that and how you can improve that, that would be the best thing that could come out of this review.
[160] Rosemary Butler: I am sure that the Members will listen to you. I have often said that the minutiae tend to take over. However, they may want to ask about grass-roots level as it is very important. Your point is well taken. Can someone answer the question about disaffected youth?
[161] Mr Lillicrap: It is not a specialist subject of mine, but there are existing trusts in the English system where the trust, because it is an amalgam of supporters, can work with the club and can sometimes do things that the club is not very good at. The club has to work on running the club, whereas the trust can work with the local authority. There are more and more instances where the sport is being used as a centre for learning and the stadium is being developed as a community stadium so that courses can be run for disaffected youth at the club without necessarily distracting from its main business. Again, it is just the common sense use of services and it facilitates it. So, it is happening—allow me

to volunteer to find an example.
[162] Eleanor Burnham: The vision leading on from that is that they would not be disaffected if they could have the facilities and the availability of football side by side with education, which one of you discussed.
[163] Laura Anne Jones: It falls to me to be last, but Mike Harris, I think that you hit the nail on the head; it is all about money at the end of the day, and the mismanagement of money, which is clear, and the lack of a common vision, which I am seeing as I go to football clubs around the country and encounter people playing at every level.
[164] Rosemary Butler: Laura, can I ask, did you mean mismanagement, or did you mean something else?
[165] Laura Anne Jones: No, I meant that. I will be quite clear, I do not mind.
[166] Rosemary Butler: I am just asking you to consider if that is what you want in the Record. If it is, then that is fine.
[167] Laura Anne Jones: I am happy for that to be in the Record. It is something that clearly needs to be sorted out right from the top. The money seems to be there, but you are right to say that it needs to be audited and that it needs to go to the people who know what to do with it at the local level—at the clubs, as you said—but it needs to be audited.
[168] Are you happy with the media coverage that you are getting? We have heard a couple of unhappy comments about it. Fantastic though S4C is, those like me who do not speak Welsh have problems watching it. You can watch it, but you cannot hear what is going on, so, considering that English is still the majority language in Wales, you are not getting the number of people that we would like watching our game. Some clubs have clearly got it right with the commercial directors, but we cannot have people like them and Mike Harris and Bob Paton going all over the country to every club and sorting them all out. We need that from the centre. Can you clarify whether you said that there is no commercial director at all at the top? It is disgraceful if that is the case. Some clubs, such as Rhyl, were making more money—
11.00 a.m.
[169] Mr Harris: What I said is that, if the plan is right for disaffected youth and grass-roots football, if the chief executive has a vision which the stakeholders buy into, whether it is your concern or whatever—this is the detail of the plan—because there is no plan, we do not know what we need. So, there should be somebody with a vision who gets the buy-in of all the stakeholders, be it at grass-roots, national league, national team, people in the communities, or supporters and so on, whereby they go, 'Yes, that looks right for me. We have got this amount of money; this is what we can achieve within that'. So, there are your goals, there are your targets, and there is what you can do; and that is when, I believe, the Assembly can buy into it, and so can other stakeholders, television people and so on.
[170] Again, it was not about money; it was about the fact that those were the details which had come from a vision, and that is where, I believe, you need the accountability at the very top so that that vision is then deployed.
[171] Laura Anne Jones: So, you are saying that the structure, basically, needs to be sorted out before we can get companies to invest in Welsh football, which is so desperately needed. That is the difference between us and the English clubs, is it not?
[172] Mr Harris: I believe so.
[173] Laura Anne Jones: My other question concerns referees. The abuse of referees in top-level games has been well publicised; do you think that that puts people off becoming referees?

[174] **Mr Lawlor:** I think that it does, without doubt, have an effect. When I look at the figure for referees registered in the north Wales coast region, for example, there is something like 163, or, last season, it was 151. A high percentage of those have refereed for many years; they are long term, in that, they get through that first 12 to 18 months to two years, during which it tends to affect them less. Our biggest problem is with retaining the youngsters who come through courses. When they are subjected to a little bit of aggression or similar, we tend to lose them. Without doubt, I would be wrong were I to say that what people see on the television and read in the newspapers does not affect situations like that. I would love to see a lot of the ex-players take up refereeing when they come to the end of their playing careers or maybe when they have a bit of an injury and so on. I was 21 when I took up refereeing, and I was playing at the time. I got more respect from the clubs because of the fact that I had been playing. It is something that I would like to see, if some players were to come in, because a lot can be achieved in refereeing. Sitting here now, I can say that my refereeing has taken me to over 30 of UEFA's 52 countries, with involvement in over 80 games. So, what youngsters coming into the game can achieve is terrific and fantastic, but the answer to your question centres on what they see, and that, without a doubt, have an effect.

[175] **Rosemary Butler:** Thank you. Does anybody else want to come back with any other points? Lisa?

[176] **Lisa Francis:** From what everybody has said today, there has to be a sea change in the philosophy, outlook or strategy of the FAW. Yet, it seems to be a very difficult organisation to which to get that message across or to influence in any way—the phrase 'closed shop' was used. Do you have any ideas about how that message can be got across? Are there any key opinion leaders in that association that we ought to be approaching? If the FAW does not respond to what has been said today, what is the future for Welsh football?

[177] **Rosemary Butler:** Is that a rhetorical question, or do you want an answer?

[178] **Lisa Francis:** I would like an answer. I think that we all know, but I would like to hear it.

[179] **Rosemary Butler:** Would anybody like to answer that point?

[180] **Mr Furnival:** The only thing that I will say is that, unless, as Mike says, we sort out the structure at the top of our FA—and for most of us at this end of the table, our interest is mostly in Welsh Premier League—we do not know where the money goes, and there is no democracy. I am not frightened of saying that, although I may just get fined for it. There is a total lack of democracy in the FA; there is no direct route in, only that through the FA councils, which, I think meet three or four times a year. Unless you get the professionalism sorted out, with a set of objectives, while targets are going to be at international level, at European level and at local level alike, it will never be cured. While there is a closed door—and let us be honest about it: there is a closed door—nothing will be done, unless pressure is brought by parliamentary means.

[181] **Laura Anne Jones:** Someone mentioned having a national academy or an academy run by—once the structure is sorted out—the FAW.

[182] **Rosemary Butler:** Do you mean funded by FAW?

[183] **Laura Anne Jones:** Yes. It would then be split up into regions but it would be paid for by FAW. Could you expand on that?

[184] **Mr Harris:** It was my comment. The clubs today have to do this for their licensing—we touched on the fact that we have to have a licence to play in the European competitions. There are 17 clubs—last season there were 18—in the league, which had to go for this licence. To get their licence, all clubs have to demonstrate that they have an academy system in their club. We get £6,000 or

£7,000 from the FAW, per club, to help to run it. To do it properly and to have what I call a meaningful outcome, you need to put in at least £100,000.

[185] The FAW Trust gets a chunk of money to run grass-roots football. If that money were pooled—and I do not think that the clubs would mind it if the FAW were to run three academies, in north, south and mid Wales and if we pushed our players at it and they ran it on our behalf—we could then tick the box for our licence. There would be no need to spend any money on running an academy; they would do it for us. Or the clubs could run their own academy and, if that was done properly, they could use the money, and grass-roots football would take care of itself, because it is a by-product of the academy system and football in the community. So, we are doing two things and both are probably underfunded, but if you pool the money together, you could do one or the other pretty well.

[186] **Rosemary Butler:** I would just like to clarify something. You spoke about the FAW and the FAW Trust. Is it the FAW Trust that runs the academies?

[187] **Mr Harris:** The clubs run the academies, but what we are saying is the FAW—

[188] **Rosemary Butler:** The trust or the FAW?

[189] **Mr Harris:** The FAW gives the trust money, and you guys probably give it money, to run grass-roots football. What we are saying is that if you pool that chunk of money with the chunk of money that we get to run our academy, which is nowhere near enough to do it properly, you could either do it through the clubs, by giving that money that goes into the FAW Trust to the clubs, slimming down their staffing and then having good auditors to ensure that the clubs have spent their money properly, or by letting the FAW Trust run three regional academies, in north, south and mid Wales. The clubs could then say 'We do not have to do this; all we have to do is affiliate ourselves to the academy in our region'. So, you will effectively be doing things once rather than trying to do it twice.

[190] **Rosemary Butler:** I have two other speakers. Alun wants to come back on that and then I will bring this to a close.

[191] **The Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport (Alun Pugh):** The Assembly Government puts a substantial amount of funding directly into the FAW Trust. I would be very interested in hearing, collectively from the top-level clubs in Wales, whether it is your collective position that you would like to see, in future grant rounds, the money distributed either by the FAW Trust and then onto a regional academy through that model or directly to clubs, with an audited trail to ensure that the clubs run their individual categories properly. I would like to know the collective view of the clubs on this matter. Not necessarily now—

[192] **Rosemary Butler:** I do not think that we can do that this morning.

[193] **Mr Harris:** Clubs will vary depending on the level of infrastructure that they currently have but, one way or the other, the main achievement for the club is to get the tick in the box for its licence.

[194] **Rosemary Butler:** That is one of the issues that will probably come up in our issues paper, on which we will need more information.

[195] **Val Lloyd:** I think that my question is to Richard, but other people may want to contribute. Unfortunately, we see cases of racism in football and they are sometimes high profile. We cannot brush this under the carpet and pretend that it is not there. What is your supporters association doing to fight racism and any other forms of prejudice?

11.10 a.m.

[196] **Mr Lillicrap:** That is a very good question. The answer is probably something, but not enough. The picture is improving dramatically. You will be aware of the Kick It Out campaign. Swansea City AFC participates in that

campaign every year that it comes around; I cannot speak for the other clubs, because I do not know. My personal experience from the terraces—or what used to be the terraces—of Swansea City AFC is that the racism issue is dissipating quite rapidly, just through peer pressure and saying that that sort of behaviour is not acceptable. It has not vanished, and let us not be complacent about it, but the message is strong and it is getting out there. Against that, you could say that the representation of minorities on the terraces does not match the population as a whole, and, therefore, we are not doing enough to bring people into the game at the base level. It is something, but not enough.

[197] **Rosemary Butler:** I am sure that we would all agree with that. Does anyone else wish to comment?

[198] **Eleanor Burnham:** One of you made a comment about UEFA being fed up with Wales. If we do what you say in terms of cleaning up the act within the FA generally, from the top down, would that problem with UEFA then go away, or is it something more problematic?

[199] **Mr Furnival:** I made that comment. That is what you feel when you go to meetings with UEFA. Over recent years, especially with our heavy involvement in Europe over the last four or five years, every time we go, we hear, 'God, it is Wales again—what have they not done on time this year?'. We are penalised each year, and heavily fined for slight misdemeanours; that is what we get thrown at us. To reverse it a little, we say, 'What about Kazakhstan and Moldova, who do not have proper accounting systems; how do they get away with it?', and we are told, 'Ah, they applied for exemption at the start, and we cannot give retrospective exception to these rules; Wales did not apply, and now you must comply'. Gradually, UEFA has got to the stage at which it is rather fed up of our whingeing; I believe that Mike can back us up on that.

[200] **Eleanor Burnham:** But is your whingeing because of a lack of money to conform to these heavy regulations?

[201] **Mr Furnival:** I agree with Mike; I do not believe that there is a total lack of money, but we cannot find out where it goes.

[202] **Eleanor Burnham:** Okay. The last question is on the support. If all this is sorted out, which you are going to try to help us to do, will that help increase support for the games?

[203] **Mr Furnival:** I would not like to say. I believe that we are the top supported club in Wales at our level. Off the top of my head, 60 to 65 per cent of our attendees are over 65 years of age. We are lucky if we take £1,000 a weekend, and we are the best club at doing that sort of thing in Wales. To be fair, due to our location on the coast, we are too near to five English clubs on Merseyside. Coaches still go as far afield as Wolverhampton every week from Rhyl, so we will never really compete with that. We are faced with that problem unless we elevate ourselves to those sorts of standards.

[204] **Rosemary Butler:** It is important that structures are correct, but the structures will not attract people to football; attractive football will attract people to football.

[205] It has been an interesting morning. When you are asked to review something, people always look at the things that are not working. It would be helpful if you could give us some indication of the things that are working and are good; we do not want to throw the baby out with the bathwater in terms of any possible recommendations. When someone gives you the opportunity to air your views, the concerns tend to come to the top, as opposed to the positive thoughts. Therefore, if there are any good things that you wish to let us know about, that would be helpful.

[206] You have raised some interesting issues this morning. They include funding academies, which Laura raised, the suggestion of UEFA having money to help

with a review, if a review is ever called for, and how you are dealing with the growing issue of women coming into the sport, which will cost money because you need additional facilities. The other issue on which we probably need more information is the cost of moving up a league. Assuming that you have the players and the standard of play, no-one should be barred from moving up because there is no money. So, we need to look at the cost. I know that it is difficult as every club will be different, but that would be helpful at some point. If there are any points that you have not made this morning that you would like to make in the future, please feel free to do so as this is an ongoing review until the autumn. It is a review to get a snapshot of where we are with football in Wales. In early September, we will issue a paper on issues that we would like to pursue, so we may want you to come to give us more evidence on that. Are there any other points?

[207] **Owen John Thomas:** I have a small but important point to make. It is less than 10 years ago since the FAW started receiving a reasonable amount of money from television companies. Until nine or 10 years ago, it was just receiving small sums of money, such as a couple of thousand pounds. Someone realised this and asked, 'Is that all that you get?', and it realised that there was big money to be had, and it has been receiving big money since then. So, at least in the last eight, nine or 10 years, it should have been doing more of the things that people have been requesting, but we cannot perhaps blame it for what has happened during the last 130 years since it was formed.

[208] **Rosemary Butler:** 'Blame' is not a word that I would like to use in this committee, if that is okay. The point has been made that the FAW gets more money in, but until it can guarantee good home international matches, it cannot know what is coming in the future. That is quite an issue.

[209] Thank you for that. We will break for coffee now, and you are more than welcome to join us. I ask Members to return by 11.35 a.m..

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 11.17 a.m. a 11.35 a.m.
The meeting adjourned between 11.17 a.m. and 11.35 a.m.*

Doc36

Wednesday, 28 June 2006

Adolygiad o Bêl-droed yng Nghymru Review of Football in Wales

[8] **Rosemary Butler:** I am pleased that we have our evidence givers here this morning, even though it is only 9 a.m., so thank you very much for coming. The purpose of this session is to look particularly at the development issues for young people, football for women and girls, and those with disabilities. Presentations will be given by a number of people, but we also have with us Neil Ward, who has been with us before. You are welcome to sit at the table if you wish, Neil. I understand that, unfortunately, Rob Lewis from the south Wales girls' football league is unable to be with us this morning due to family commitments, but he will give us a written paper at a future date instead. So, this morning we have the Welsh Schools Football Association with us. Cledwyn Ashford is the under-16s selector, David Nickless is the under-16s secretary, and Keith James is the vice-chair. Welcome, gentlemen. From the Football Association of Wales Trust, we have the youth and disabilities officer, Jamie Clewer, and Debbie Wise, the women and girls' football co-ordinator. The representative from the office of the children's commissioner has yet to arrive. We welcome you all. If you would like to give your evidence first, we will run through you all and then ask questions, provided you are comfortable with that. We find it easier that way, because, if we stop after every one, we never get to the final presentation. So, who will start this morning? I see that the schools will.

[9] **Mr Ashford:** Diolch yn fawr iawn am y gwahoddiad i ddod yma'r bore yma.

Mr Ashford: Thank you very much for the invitation to come here this morning.

[10] It is nice to be invited and to give our presentation. Diolch o galon.

[11] Byddaf yn siarad yn Saesneg, oherwydd credaf fod y rhan fwyaf o bobl yn ddi-Gymraeg; mae hynny'n sicr yn wir am fy mhen i o'r bwrdd.

I will speak in English, because I believe that most people are non-Welsh speakers; that is certainly true of my end of the table.

[12] We are looking at the review of football in Wales, and we were delighted to be asked to give a presentation, because we feel that we have a long history of providing football in Wales, and this is why we have put this together. Please excuse me if I am not very good, but I will do my best—you can tell that I am an amateur. [*Laughter.*] I think that you have seen this presentation before, but I will go through it in the five minutes that we have.

[13] First, we have the mission statement for the Welsh Schools Football Association. It is very much in line with the things that we do in schools generally. Our aim is to encourage the mental, moral and physical development of all pupils and students. We are unique as we are the only organisation that can have all pupils in Wales in our care—everyone has to go to school. I am 54, and I am still in school. [*Laughter.*] Every child has to go to school, and, therefore, we hope that we can influence and encourage them in many ways. We provide competitions for primary and high-school pupils up to the age of 16. Some come back to study for A-levels, so we have some of them until they are 18. That is why we have a situation where we have international football at 15, 16 and under 18, under the rules of the Schools Association International Board and FIFA. We are lucky to be able to do that.

In the last four years, we have been doing it in association with the FAW Trust, working with the FAW and the FAW Trust in identifying and developing young players—and believe you me, I mean young. We are identifying them now as young as eight, nine or 10, which is quite interesting.

[14] We now go on to look at sport for all, which is important, but we are looking particularly at football. Every school has physical education lessons and inter-house games. It depends on which school the children attend, but every school has the opportunity to provide this for all children. I know, Chair, that we met representatives of the sports merit award, or the sport Wales award, and many schools provide tremendous opportunities for children, of which football is one. There are inter-school games on a regional basis. In our own authority, along with Wrexham, around 160 schools take part in inter-school football. The games also take place on a national level. Children can begin by playing at a regional level, and then go on to play at a national level. They have fantastic success. However, it is not all about that; we want to identify the true category-A players, but it is also important that we provide the grass-roots football that everyone can enjoy—both boys and girls.

9.10 a.m.

[15] There are area association competitions based on unitary authorities, which have been going on for many years. We also have the district competitions, which also provide an opportunity for the better players to play quality football and compete. We then go on to regional development groups in north and south Wales. That started around 10 years ago, when we felt that it was important to identify the players who would be our future internationals. We felt that we could do that as a Welsh schools forum, because we had the contacts in the schools and the leagues, and we were able to identify these players, get them together and then develop them as two groups. In the last few years, that was done in conjunction with the FAW Trust.

[16] On north and south Wales teams, some of our young people have the honour of representing their zone, whether it is north or south Wales. That is as far as some of those youngsters go, but what a marvellous achievement to represent the area in which they live. We ensure that that is recognised by presenting them with certificates to be put in their records of achievements, because when they go for job opportunities, it is an ideal way of showing that they have represented their area.

[17] Some are lucky enough to go on to the national team. We have been running the national team and the under-15 and under-16 teams for many years. In the last three years, we have worked closely with the FAW Trust and the success has continued. These children will, hopefully, go on to represent us at Welsh level. Mr Brian Flynn works very closely with us at the moment. He has been to our last four get-togethers. He is identifying players ready for the under-17 and under-19 groups. You have the national teams, and we have those who are under 15 and under 16. You can see above that we have an excellent structure system for player identification. All players are seen and monitored regularly by national selectors—people like myself and Mr Nickless, Mr Flynn in south Wales and Mr Williams. We go around numerous games on weekends, nights and so on to see them. We just watch young people play football. There is a lot of talent out there and it is a great honour to see them.

[18] On arrangements for the FAW Trust, we have a service level agreement between the two parties for the national and regional groups at the under-15 and under-16 levels. That is currently under review and we will look at that a week on Saturday, because we have a Welsh schools council. We represent the hundreds and thousands of school teachers in Wales and we are honoured to do so. We will then be in discussion with Mr Neil Ward and his colleagues on our agreement. It is important that it is a partnership, which we will also discuss a week on Saturday.

[19] In future, we would like to see a similar arrangement to set up centres of excellence in each unitary authority. I think that this is the way forward. At the moment, there is much fragmentation, because we have the schools, the trust and the league of Wales clubs, with six or seven different people trying to do different things. We feel, as Welsh schools, that the best way forward is to have one type of unitary authority set-up in partnership with other people that can get the quality people together to give them opportunities.

[20] These centres would be staffed by schoolteachers and that is important. They still have a significant part to play in children's education, although many would say that that is not the case. For me, children's education comprises many factors, one of which is football. They have had three or four years' experience of knowing how to deal with children and I think that they need to be part of this. We have the football development officers and their coaching staff, who are very important to this set-up.

[21] Players are coached weekly and play in competition in the existing school system. We have a fantastic structure in place. No-one has anything like the structure that we have in terms of the number of children competing and the structure itself on area, regional and district levels. It is run by very enthusiastic and unpaid people, who do it voluntarily because they love doing it. They have done it for many years and that will continue.

[22] If centres were set up by league of Wales clubs, we would have a slight problem with that. In some areas, there are too many clubs chasing too few players, and some of the clubs are not in existence. So, in some areas, you might have three or four league of Wales clubs and if we use those as a centre—and it has happened in our area—it will not be successful, because, first, children do not know which to go to and, secondly, there is too much choice. In other areas, children have too far to travel. It would be far better to have these unitary authority centres, where you know that there would be one in each authority. That would make sense.

[23] On Welsh Schools Football Association competitions, there are six inter-association national competitions for under 11s to under 15s. I will not bore you on this, but on inter-area competitions for those who are under 13, we offer a range of competitions and, as you can see, they are extensive, and they give all children an opportunity to play at national, district, or association level. For instance, in Flintshire, 10 are offered to children.

[24] On facilities, and looking at the future, in general, the state of pitches is below standard at schools, leisure centres and local authorities. I can say that because I have been to Slovakia, Belgium, Holland, and other places, where the standard is much higher. Please do not think that I am having a go at you on this—I am having a go at everything in general. We have lacked foresight in looking at our pitches and the standard of them; good pitches are badly needed—they are few and far between.

[25] On the lack of maintenance, this is a big issue at present in Flintshire. There is a marked difference between private schools and state schools. Going past King's, just outside Rossett, and seeing the standard of their pitches, you think, 'What I would give for that in my area, so that the children could benefit from it'.

[26] It is imperative to have a national development centre. We went to Slovakia and Belgium with the under-15 boys. Their facilities are outstanding—from 13 to 19 only—which was an eye-opener for us. There are no suitable grassed areas, for instance, for coaching sessions at the Welsh Institute of Sport, which is a disadvantage.

[27] On finance—the F-word—besides the under-15 and under-16 national squad development groups, there are national teams. The WSFA is self-funded—we have nothing except self-funding. We are indebted to the FAW Trust, which helps us finance the under-15s and the under-16s, but, otherwise, all those other developments that I speak about are voluntarily funded—there is no funding at all from the Welsh FA or from the trust. The grass-roots work is done directly by us.

[28] On the national squad, and the national teams at under-15 and under-16 levels, as I say, they are funded by the FAW Trust and the WSFA; a greater proportion comes from the trust, and we could not have done it without it. In the past, the WSFA received grants from the FAW and the sports council. This is now paid to the FAW Trust, and we have no knowledge of the amount or anything of that nature. No finance from the FAW Trust filters down to the WSFA to fund the grass roots, because I am sure that it is restricted the same as everyone else. Therefore, competition and activities are funded by ourselves. There is no funding for the under-18 international squad at present.

[29] On the FAW and the FAW Trust relationship, as an association, we are not in a position to comment, as we are not privy to their relationships and agreements—both financial and managerial. Therefore, we cannot comment on that.

[30] On future direction, the WSFA and the FAW Trust should renew current partnership agreements for the national squads and team. We are keen to do that. There are a few things to iron out, but I am positive that they will be. The WSFA and the FAW Trust, in partnership, need to set up these centres of excellence in each unitary authority. That is imperative. At present, FAW Trust personnel, who are half-financed, I believe, between the unitary authorities and the trust in some areas, rely greatly on our facilities in schools.

[31] On great funding—I am sorry, grant funding; it would be great—for LEAs to allow schools to release teachers to accompany teams to games, this is a slight problem that we have. As you know, especially if you have been involved in education—in terms of the workload agreement and planning, preparation and assessment—it is difficult to release staff to go with children, whether they represent the school, the county, or an association. Unfortunately, headteachers do not get any form of funding to be able to do that.

[32] On grant funding for teachers to support extra-curricular activities, this has been discussed at a national level in London. All the teachers that give of their time do so for free. There is no funding at all for teachers to do this out-of-hours work—they go on Saturdays, and at nights, and they go to the squads that we have in partnership with the FAW Trust. There is no compensation at all—it is purely voluntary. We could perhaps look at that.

[33] Improvements in playing facilities in schools, leisure centres and playing fields are a must for the future. We need the provision of a grassed coaching area at the Welsh Institute of Sport for the national development squads. Developing a national development centre would be forward-looking; there is one in Scotland—we have been there twice, I believe, Mr Nickless—and it is a fantastic facility to have.

[34] On funding to filter down to the WSFA to enable it to continue to operate its extensive programme of football for all, as I say, again, we are the only association that can do that, because every child has to come to school. Funding to assist the WSFA in running the under-18 national squad is rather a contentious issue, but we feel that young people who decide to stay in school and take their A-levels should have the opportunity to play international football. At the moment, the only way that they can do that is through the system.

9.20 a.m.

[35] We firmly believe that the skills, experiences and expertise of WSFA personnel and its member associations should be utilised fully in co-operation with other bodies to ensure that the structure effectively supports football in Wales.

[36] There will be co-operation between the WSFA and the FAW Trust to initiate quality standards in football, for inter-schools football and WSFA member associations football.

[37] I am sorry had to rush the presentation, but I was aware that I had a strict time limit. I hope that it is in order, Chair.

[38] **Rosemary Butler:** Thank you—the hard copy is very useful, and there will no doubt be many questions in a while. Who is going next? Jamie? Jamie is the disabilities officer for the FAW Trust.

[39] **Mr Clewer:** Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Jamie Clewer and I am employed by FAW Trust, and I am the national co-ordinator for disability football. I will talk through the paper that you have, hopefully, received prior to the meeting. I will highlight the progress on the disability programme so far. The disability programme has been in existence from early 2004. I will also briefly talk through the five key aims of our national disability football strategy for 2005 to 2010, and I will just quickly highlight a few operational key issues to make you aware of them.

[40] Where are we now? Currently, there are two part-time national disability football co-ordinators—I job share the role with a lady called Nicola Tennant. We have regional remits; I cover south Wales up to mid-Powys and Ceredigion, and Nicola covers further north.

[41] In terms of provision, an audit was undertaken in January this year, and we currently have eight pan-disability football clubs across Wales. For those of you who do not know, pan-disability football is an environment in which children with differing impairments come together to play in the same environment, so it is not specific. The six major impairment groups are learning disability, deaf, blind, visual impairment, cerebral palsy and amputee. At the time that the audit was done, in January, there were approximately 267 children playing regular football across Wales. Since the audit, we are up to about 12 clubs, and it is estimated that there are approximately 350 to 400 children playing football in a football-specific environment in Wales.

[42] Allied to that, we also have two specific partially-sighted football clubs—one in partnership with Swansea City Football Club and the other in partnership with Cardiff City Football Club. Approximately 25 children play in those clubs.

[43] There is also a deaf-specific club based at Llantwit Major, which is an adult side. It has approximately 20 players, and it draws players from across Wales. It recently reached the semi-finals of the British Deaf Cup, and narrowly lost to Fulham on penalties.

[44] Alongside that, and developed by Disability Sport Wales, approximately 10 multi-sport clubs play football regularly and about 130 children take part in those clubs.

[45] We also have a schools programme, and the key aim is to get children playing football and moving on into the club structures. We have worked with 30 special schools or units across Wales during the past two years. The programme is funded by the community chest fund—we provide equipment and a trained coach to go into the school to deliver a 10-week coaching programme. Approximately 300 children have participated in sessions through that method. We have also organised regional schools festivals allied to that, and approximately 500 children have been to festivals so far.

[46] We have an annual national disabilities football tournament for clubs, which is based at Aberystwyth. Our event in 2006 took place two weeks ago—we had 14 teams from across Wales with 80 children taking part. It was a great day, although we all got sunburned, unfortunately.

[47] We have a dedicated programme for children with visual impairments, in partnership with the Royal National Institute for the Blind Cymru, Swansea City Football Club and Cardiff City Football Club's football in the community schemes, as I mentioned before. The reason for having specific visual impairment and blind programmes is because, as you are probably aware, visual disability is a sensory disability and it is not necessarily easy for those children to integrate into a pan-disability environment.

[48] We also have the FAW footballers with a disability workshop, which is a three-hour theory workshop and coach education course. It helps to raise the awareness of coaches of disability issues and it is the first sport-specific coach education course on disability in Wales. We have also recently established a national disability football forum, on which are represented all the key partners and stakeholders of disability sport and disability football in Wales—the likes of the FAW and the Federation of Disability Sport Wales are represented on that body. So, that is an overview of where we are now.

[49] I will briefly talk through the five key aims of our national strategy for 2006 to 2010. The first is club development. As I mentioned, we currently have approximately 12 clubs, but it is our aim, by 2007, to have 22 pan-disability football clubs across Wales, that is, one per local authority. Linked to that, we will have a schools programme that will be aimed at getting children involved in football and then making that key link to the clubs, to ensure that they are sustainable. Our aim is to engage every single special school or unit across Wales and to provide extra-curricular opportunities for children to play football in those schools.

[50] As you are probably aware, the FAW Trust runs the McDonald's/FAW Trust primary school accreditation scheme. We have recently amended the programme so that it is now inclusive of disability. We now provide, in addition to a generic schools bag, a disability-specific equipment bag for schools, and we also have—as I mentioned before—a programme of festivals. We are hoping, from September 2006 onwards, to extend that from secondary to primary schools as well. That will mean that there will be competitive opportunities for all children with disabilities in special education across Wales.

[51] On competition structures, I mentioned the schools festivals, which we are hoping to develop eventually into a proper special schools competition across Wales. Hopefully, that will be done in consultation with the WSFA and with its endorsement. We will also be looking to work closely with the area associations and the FAW to develop a number of regional festival leagues, which will allow our clubs to play regular football, four or five times a year, at a central venue. So, clubs will have four or five regional festivals and then a national festival, therefore, there will be six opportunities for children to play regular football across Wales.

[52] On coach education, I mentioned the workshop. We are currently have work in progress on a practical course, which will be ready from January 2007. That will be a six-hour one-day course to help coaches to get to grips with organising coaching sessions and being able to adapt their sessions to work with players who have a disability. There will also be a third tier of qualification that we are looking to develop, which would be impairment-specific modules, so there would be a deaf module, for example, which will take that a step further and give coaches real, in-depth information of specific impairment groups. Those will be aimed at potential coaches who will work within a player-development structure for disability football.

[53] The fifth key area of work is communication. A lot of disparate organisations have a stake in disability sport and disability football, not only in Wales, but in the whole of the UK. It is crucial that we ensure that there are good and clear communication channels throughout all those organisations. The forum is helping to do this. This has been work in progress, and we need to keep on doing that.

[54] So, that is an overview of the key aims of the strategy. I will just run through four issues—I was asked to highlight some issues in relation to the programme, so I will do that now. The first, as I mentioned, is linked to communication, and it is really about the management of partnerships to ensure the continued delivery of the disability football programme. On a local basis, there is a football development officer in each local authority in Wales, there is also a disability sports officer employed by the Federation of Disability Sport Wales. That is 22 local partnerships that we need to manage, not to mention the partnerships that we need to manage between the FAW, the WSFA and the Federation of Disability Sport Wales. So, it will be a key area of work to ensure that those partnerships are managed well, so that the programme is ultimately successful.

[55] The second point is an issue to do with transport. You may be aware that it is an issue that is highlighted in a number of disability areas, not just sport. It is linked to the practicalities and logistics of developing a competition structure and also to looking at developing player-development structures. Transport and travelling are not always easy for children or adults with a disability. Currently, public funds do not necessarily support the provision of transport to support this. I am not saying that I necessarily disagree with that, but the key thing is, and I understand that it is an issue of sustainability, but if we cannot provide children or adults with a disability the support to travel, our competition structures and our player-development structures will struggle to be successful. We will not have the player numbers. Wales is a rural country and that has an impact on how we can drive the programme forward to a certain degree.

9.30 a.m.

[56] The third point is an issue of welfare. I mentioned that we have 12 clubs: they are predominantly under-16 clubs, but we have a wide spectrum of children from roughly eight to 16 years of age and they are of mixed gender. The FAW has rules on age bandings and mixed-gender football, but we need to look at a welfare policy and a rules and regulations structure that is suitable for disability and is aware of key welfare issues. We perhaps need to look at a structure that has wider age bands and allows mixed-gender football to make disability football sustainable in Wales, as I mentioned before on the other issues.

[57] The fourth key issue, which I did not talk about in terms of the aims, but is included in the national strategy, is that we have outlined that, by 2010, we would like to have representative teams from Wales in the six impairment groups that I mentioned earlier. This will have key implications and one is funding. The FAW looks after the male and female national squads, but there is only one each of those, a male and a female team; with disability football there would potentially be six teams, as I mentioned earlier, including teams for those with learning disabilities and the blind and so on. Allied to that, you would possibly also have regional development centres or regional squads and then junior sides. Therefore, funding will have to be a key consideration to enable the key bodies to support those teams.

[58] My second key point on that concerns responsibility for the development of those squads. The FAW Trust is given the remit of disability football by the FAW. However, the FAW is responsible for the national squads involving players above 16 years of age. We also answer to the Federation of Disability Sport Wales, the national governing body for disability sport in Wales. We really need to look at a partnership between the three bodies to ensure that we all work together on the aim of developing national squads for Wales, so that we can represent Wales on the international stage, just as the other home nations are doing. I apologise if I rather rushed through that. Disability can be quite a complex matter, so if there are any questions, feel free to ask them later.

[59] **Rosemary Butler:** Thank you, Jamie. I have a system of yellow and red cards, but we have not had any yellow ones yet, so that is fine. Debbie, are you going to make your presentation now?

[60] **Ms Wise:** Bore da i chi gyd. A fyddai gwahaniaeth gennyhych pe bawn yn siarad yng Nghymraeg?

Ms Wise: Good morning to you all. Would you mind if I spoke in Welsh?

[61] I do not get the opportunity too often to make a presentation in Welsh, so I would like to take this opportunity to do so.

[62] Yr wyf yn credu eich bod i gyd wedi derbyn y papur. A wyf yn gywir i feddwl hynny?

I believe that you have all received the paper. Am I right in thinking that?

[63] **Rosemary Butler:** Yes, I am sure that they have all received the paper.

[64] **Ms Wise:** Gwych. Cyn i mi symud ymlaen i edrych ar y papur yn fanylach, hoffwn esbonio beth yw fy rôl fel cydlynnydd pêl-droed i ferched a menywod yng Nghymru. Fel y gwyddoch, caf fy nghyflogi gan yr ymddiriedolaeth ac mae gennyf ddau brif amcan fel rhan o'm rôl. Un o'r amcanion hynny yw cynyddu nifer y merched a menywod sy'n chwarae'r gêm. Yr ail yw gwella safon y chwarae er mwyn cefnogi ein timoedd cenedlaethol, yn sicr y timoedd o dan 17 ac o dan 19 mlwydd oed a'r timoedd uwch. Fy rôl i yw eu cefnogi.

Ms Wise: Wonderful. Before I move on to look at the paper in greater detail, I would like to explain my role as football co-ordinator for women and girls in Wales. As you know, I am employed by the trust and I have two main objectives as part of my role. One of those objectives is to increase the number of women and girls who play the game. The second is to improve the standard of play to support our national teams, certainly the under-17, under-19 and senior teams. My role is to support them.

<p>[65] Os edrychwn yn fanylach ar y papur, fel y gallwch weld, crëwyd strategaeth yn benodol ar gyfer y gêm i ferched a menywod. Crëwyd y strategaeth honno i sicrhau bod y cyfan yn ffitio i strategaeth yr ymddiriedolaeth, i adeiladu ar y llwyddiant ac i gynllunio ar gyfer y dyfodol. Mae'r strategaeth hefyd yn cyd-fynd ag amcanion strategaeth 'Dringo'n Uwch' y Cynulliad. Mae popeth wedi'u ffitio at ei gilydd, felly yr ydym i gyd yn anelu at yr un nod. Yn fras, yr wyf am grynhoi'r hyn a ddywedir, gan fod eithaf tipyn wedi'i ddweud yn y papur o ran stâd neu sefyllfa'r gêm ar hyn o bryd.</p>	<p>If we look in more detail at the paper, as you can see, a specific strategy was created for the women's and girls' game. That strategy was created to ensure that it all fits in with the trust's strategy, to build on success and to plan for the future. The strategy also concurs with the aims of the Assembly's 'Climbing Higher' strategy. Everything has been fitted together, so we are all aiming for the same objective. Broadly, I want to summarize what is said, because quite a lot of information is given in the paper in terms of the state or situation of the game at present.</p>
<p>[66] Ar hyn o bryd, mae gennym tua 3,000 o ferched a thua 1,000 o fenywod yn chwarae pêl droed drwy Gymru. Mae gennym bump cynghrair uwch a 12 cynghrair ar gyfer merched, sy'n cynnwys pedair is-adran. Mae gennym ddwy garfan ddatblygu ranbarthol, yng ngogledd a de Cymru, ac un garfan ddatblygu genedlaethol.</p>	<p>At present, we have some 3,000 girls and 1,000 women playing football across Wales. We have five senior leagues and 12 girls' leagues and they include four divisions. We have two regional development squads, in north and south Wales, and one national development squad.</p>
<p>[67] O ran lle yr hoffem fynd, mae targedau heriol iawn wedi'u nodi yn y strategaeth ac yr ydym yn gobeithio cyrraedd 10,000 o chwaraewyr pêl droed yng Nghymru erbyn 2010. Felly, yr ydym yn edrych i gynyddu nifer y tîmoedd sydd gennym ac i recriwtio a chefnogi gwirfoddolwyr i'n helpu i redeg y tîmoedd hynny. Yr ydym hefyd yn bwriadu sicrhau ein bod yn parhau i gefnogi chwaraewyr er mwyn cefnogi ein tîmoedd cenedlaethol, fel y dywedais yn gynt.</p>	<p>In terms of where we want to go, very challenging targets have been set in the strategy and we hope to have 10,000 players in Wales by 2010. So, we are looking to increase the number of teams that we have and to recruit and support volunteers to assist us to run those teams. We also intend to ensure that we continue to support players in order to support our national teams, as I said earlier.</p>
<p>[68] O ran sut yr ydym yn bwriadu gwneud hynny, fel mae'r papur yn ei ddweud, mae'r berthynas rhwng y bobl allweddol yn hynod o bwysig. I ni, y bobl allweddol yw'r rhai yn y gymdeithas bêl droed, y cymdeithasau ardal, yr awdurdodau lleol, Cyngor Chwaraeon Cymru a Chymdeithas Pêl Droed Ysgolion Cymru. Mae'r bobl hyn i gyd yn hynod o bwysig inni, ac felly'r cynghreiriau—hebddynt, ble fyddai'r plant yn chwarae? Hefyd, o fewn hynny, mae'r clybiau'n bwysig inni a chredaf fod y cynllun achredu clybiau ac ysgolion yn mynd i chwarae rhan bwysig wrth ein helpu i sicrhau ein bod yn cyrraedd</p>	<p>In terms of how we intend to do that, as the paper states, the relationship between the key people is crucial. For us, the key people are those in the football association, the area associations, the local authorities, the Sports Council for Wales and the Welsh Schools Football Association. All of these people are crucial, as are the leagues—without them, where would the children play? Also, within that, the clubs are</p>

<p>y targedau sydd wedi'u gosod o fewn y strategaeth.</p>	<p>important to us and I believe that the accreditation scheme for clubs and schools will play a big and important role in terms of assisting us to meet the targets set in the strategy.</p>
<p>[69] Felly, o ran y gêm i ferched a menywod, mae pethau ar hyn o bryd mewn stâd eithaf iach. Yr ydym yn gobeithio symud ymlaen a gadael i'r gêm gynyddu i'r maint sydd yn bosibl. Mae llawer o botensial o fewn y gêm.</p>	<p>Therefore, in terms of the game for women and girls, things are quite healthy at the moment. We hope to progress and to let the game grow as much as it can. There is much potential within the game.</p>
<p>[70] Diolch am wrando. Mae'n ddrwg gennyf os nad oedd fy nghyflwyniad wedi llifo'n dda, ond yr wyf wedi ceisio ei wneud drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg. Mae croeso i chi ofyn cwestiynau.</p>	<p>Thank you for listening. I apologise if my presentation has not flowed very well, but I have tried to do it in Welsh. You are welcome to ask questions.</p>
<p>[71] Rosemary Butler: Far from it. You highlighted points that we had all picked up and you flowed very well. All Members want to ask questions. They may address their questions to one group in particular, or it could be generally across the board. That was a really interesting presentation, so thank you very much. Eleanor, do you have a question?</p>	
<p>[72] Eleanor Burnham: Oh—thank you, Chair.</p>	
<p>[73] Rosemary Butler: You did indicate. If you are not ready, I will go on to Owen John Thomas.</p>	
<p>[74] Eleanor Burnham: I can be ready.</p>	
<p>[75] You all talk about finance. Has anyone identified how much, if you had a wishlist, you would need and how you would use that? You talk about a strategy, for instance, Debbie, and I could not quite see—and I would just like a clarification from all of you on this—how much you would need, if you had a wishlist.</p>	
<p>[76] Rosemary Butler: Is that in terms of need or want, Eleanor?</p>	
<p>[77] Eleanor Burnham: Either.</p>	
<p>[78] I am one of these people who prefer to see diagrams. If there was an organisational chart, for instance, Cledwyn, what kind of organisational chart would you like? You mentioned that there were too many activities and too many organisations in what is going on. Perhaps you could clarify what you would prefer to have. If you cannot do it now—you know, I like pictures.</p>	
<p>9.40 a.m.</p>	
<p>[79] Mr Ashford: There is certainly a structure that we would like to see, and a costing as well. My colleagues, David Nickless and Keith James, are more involved in the financial aspects, but I will just return to the fact that, at the moment, we have no finance at all; that is, it is all self-generated. As you can appreciate, with the type of responsibilities that we have, and the competitions that we run for thousands of children in Wales, that is quite difficult. We certainly could not have carried on with the situation with the national teams without the support of the FAW Trust. However, it is the grass-roots level that</p>	

worries us, because we have to self-finance. I am not sure whether I am dropping you in it, Mr Nickless, but do you have some figures that we could relate to?

[80] **Mr Nickless:** Yes. If we refer to the 'Future Directions' and the third item there;

'Grant funding for LEA's to allow teachers to be released to accompany... teams to games.'

[81] **Rosemary Butler:** That is on page 12.

[82] **Mr Nickless:** Yes, sorry. It is no. 11.

[83] We estimate that it will cost about £2,000 per unitary authority, because they would need to release about 24 teachers per unitary authority for half a day on each occasion, and that would cost about £40,000 per annum. Grant funding for teachers to support extra curricular activities is, I am afraid, a finger in the wind, depending on various things. However, to take one school, I suppose that we would be talking about £5,000 per annum, so you are talking about colossal sums of money throughout the principality. Under the improvement of playing facilities in schools heading, I would think that you would be talking about £200,000 per annum across Wales.

[84] A lot of good work is done, but this is about the finesse work at the end of it. Maybe we do not get the grass cut sufficiently often, and maybe the fields are not harrowed and rolled, so we end up with very bumpy facilities, which are not conducive to good coaching facilities. On the provision of a grassed coaching area, there are fields adjacent to the Welsh Institute of Sport, but I am afraid that they are in poor condition. Maybe part of that could be hired off to the Welsh Institute of Sport and maintained. I would think that you would be talking about maybe £20,000 to £30,000 per year, but whether there would be a capital cost initially, I do not know, because I do not know what the arrangements would be between Cardiff County Council and the Welsh Institute of Sport, and where the campus boundaries change.

[85] Many of the things in 'Future Directions' will not cost us anything, because they will come under our arrangements with FAW Trust, and we can drive a lot of those forward to the betterment of sport and football in general.

[86] If we come to funding to filter down to the Welsh Schools Football Association, at the moment, the only funding that we get is through our sponsorship deal with one of the national banks to support our inter-school competitions, and that was £15,000 per annum. We are hoping to renew that some time in the next couple of months, but if it fails, then there is obviously a shortfall of £15,000. In the past, we received a grant from the FAW, which amounted to £5,000 to £6,000 per annum, and one from the sports council of £3,000 or £4,000 per annum. We do not get those any more, and that is paid directly into the FAW Trust. So, we are saying that we would be looking for something like £10,000 to help us to build up our grass-roots programme.

[87] **Rosemary Butler:** I think that it might be helpful, if you are happy to do so, were you to send us figures.

[88] **Mr Nickless:** I will make a hard copy and send it to you.

[89] **Rosemary Butler:** That might be very helpful, if it is not too much work. On other matters, such as coaching areas, we can talk to the Sports Council for Wales about that. We have the Welsh Local Government Association coming to our next evidence session, and an issue that Owen John has already raised is that of the condition of football pitches, so we can ask that of local authorities.

However, it would be helpful if you could tell us what kind of funding is needed. You are obviously getting some funding, and it would be helpful for us to know what the FAW Trust has given you. Is that helpful?

[90] **Jamie**, you mentioned the cost of transport, did you not?

[91] **Mr Clewer**: To be honest with you, I think that we would need to do a detailed analysis of that. I would not even put forward a figure today. We really do need to look at and consider that in the longer term. If we could develop competition structures and a player development structure, we need to cost that out and see whether there is an opportunity to help us to fund that. I can understand the issues of the sports council and various other bodies, and that that their concern is the sustainability of that funding once the funding is removed and how an activity is sustained. It is a key issue. However, I feel quite strongly that that should not be a stumbling block to us developing sport as a whole for people with a disability. That is the key area. I certainly would like to do more research into that before I would even suggest a figure.

[92] **Rosemary Butler**: Debbie, do you have any comments?

[93] **Ms Wise**: It is the same in my case; I really would need to look in far more detail before putting a figure on anything. As I said to you when I was talking to the paper, clubs are a crucial part of our game because they provide the exit routes to allow girls to play regular football on a weekly basis within the leagues. That would certainly be an area that we would need to look at in more detail. The same also applies to manpower, in terms of—

[94] **Rosemary Butler**: Not to mention woman power.

[95] **Ms Wise**: Yes, but manpower in terms of personnel to ensure that we can meet the targets that have been set within the strategy.

[96] **Rosemary Butler**: I think that it is obviously a very important issue, but we do not want this report to get bogged down in figures. We will probably ask at the end that more work be done on how these things could be funded, but it is a very important question that Eleanor has asked this morning. Do you want to move on to another point?

[97] **Eleanor Burnham**: Yes. Last night, there was a meeting with Lord Coe and—*[Inaudible]*—about the Olympics—*[Inaudible]*—responsibilities. I asked a question about developing facilities in Wales, and whether that might even have some impact on north Wales, because I think that during the next six years there will be a concentration on Olympic facilities and whatever. My concern would be, perhaps—for instance, with the lottery, Chair—about whether there would be any opportunities during the next six years, when we are concentrating on the Olympics, to ensure that there is further development. I have been asking the Minister several questions about the fact that there is not really an audit of local authority facilities and playing fields, which bothers me. Do you think that we should be having an audit so that we can look closely at each facility that we already have and know exactly how we go from there?

[98] **Ms Wise**: Certainly, there is something else—*[Inaudible]*

[99] **Rosemary Butler**: Sorry; your microphone is not switched on. Could we have the microphones on, please? We cannot hear. Do not touch the microphone as someone will press a button in the booth, I think.

[100] **Eleanor Burnham**: It is a bit like Wimbledon.

[101] **Rosemary Butler**: Can you speak up, Debbie, until the microphone comes on?

[102] Ms Wise: Yes, of course. As the game is growing and as we strategically plan for the game to grow, obviously, there will also be more demand on facilities. Girls, as well as boys, are playing. Currently, the boys are playing on a Saturday, and some girls' leagues will play on a Sunday, but there may come a point when facilities may be a major issue in a few years' time.	
[103] Rosemary Butler: I think that that is a question that will be answered by the WLGA in the next meeting.	
[104] Mr Ashford: Sorry, Chair—	
[105] Rosemary Butler: A lot of other people want to ask questions.	
[106] Mr Ashford: Just to come back, Chair, I would confirm what you have just said. I think that we are indebted to many of the clubs that are very good to us as the Welsh Schools Football Association. They allow us to use their facilities. I can think of a few clubs in mid Wales that are very accommodating to us. However, I have a problem in north Wales; we are very much lacking in terms of national facilities. I know that that is a recognised fact. However, I would second what Debbie said; we are very lucky to have what we have, but it needs to be improved.	
[107] Rosemary Butler: We want more. Okay; thank you.	
[108] Eleanor Burnham: Chair—	
[109] Rosemary Butler: We will come back to you at the end of this item, Eleanor. Do you want to come in, Denise?	
[110] Denise Idris Jones: Thank you, Debbie, for your presentation. What success has been had in terms of improving girls' participation in football?	
[111] Ms Wise: I have now been in post for nearly a year. There has been a 300 per cent increase to date. As I say, I have only been in post for a year, so I take no credit for that increase. Currently, there are approximately 3,000 girls playing football, so 300 per cent is a massive increase.	
9.50 a.m.	
[112] Denise Idris Jones: Do we have a national team? I do not know whether we do?	
[113] Ms Wise: Yes. We have a consistent team, certainly at under-19 level. I think that we are currently ranked ninth by the Union of European Football Associations, which is a pretty good rating.	
[114] Denise Idris Jones: That is good.	
[115] Rosemary Butler: That is very good.	
[116] Owen John Thomas: Hoffwn gyfeirio at 1988 pan gyhoeddwyd y cwricwlwm newydd. Yr oedd llawer llai o bwyslais ynddo ar weithgareddau y tu allan i'r dosbarth, hynny yw, gweithgareddau y tu allan i oriau'r ysgol, ac yr oedd hynny'n effeithio ar bethau fel chwaraeon, yr Urdd, cerddoriaeth, paratoi ar gyfer cyngherddau, ac yn y blaen. Yr wyf wedi gadael y dosbarth yn awr ers rhyw saith mlynedd, felly nid wyf yn siwr beth yw'r sefyllfa gyfredol. A yw pethau wedi gwella? A oes mwy o bobl yn mynd allan gyda'u plant ar fore Sadwrn a chyda'r nos i chwarae chwaraeon, oherwydd yr oedd honno'n ergyd fawr yn ôl yn 1988?	Owen John Thomas: I would like to refer to 1988 when the new curriculum was issued. There was far less emphasis in it on after-school activities, and that impacted on areas such as sport, the Urdd, music, preparation for concerts, and so on. Having not been a teacher for some seven years, I am not aware of the current situation. Have things improved? Are there more people taking their children out on Saturday mornings and in the evenings to participate in sport, because it was a major blow back in 1988?

<p>[117] Mr Ashford: Yr oedd yn ergyd fawr, ac nid ydym wedi dod dros y peth a dweud y gwir. Mae criw da o athrawon ifanc yn dod allan o'r colegau yn awr, ac, yr wythnos hon, bŷm yn lwcus i benodi dwy athrawes newydd, sy'n gefnogol iawn o gynnal chwaraeon y tu allan i oriau'r ysgol. I fynd yn ôl at bwynt cynharach, credaf y dylai'r bobl sy'n rhoi o'u hamser gael rhyw fath o dâl—ni fyddai'n swm mawr o arian—i gynnal y gweithgareddau hyn. Mae gennyf athrawon sy'n gwneud cymaint o waith yn yr ysgol, ac, yn y sir, yr ydym yn lwcus dros ben bod gweithgareddau yn cael eu cynnal bob noson o'r wythnos—gan gynnwys pêl-droed, pêl-rwyd, athletau, criced, rownderi, ac yn y blaen. Mae gweithgareddau ardderchog yn digwydd, ac mae'r un peth yn wir am yr Urdd, fel y soniasoch, gan fod y plant yn cymryd rhan mewn gweithgareddau ar nosweithiau Gwener ac ar ddyddiau Sadwrn.</p>	<p>Mr Ashford: It was a major blow, and we have never really got over that. There is a good crowd of young teachers coming out of the colleges now, and, this week, I have been lucky to appoint two new female teachers who are very supportive of sport outside school hours. To go back to an earlier point, I believe that these people who give of their time should be reimbursed somehow—it would not be a large sum—for participating in these activities. I have teachers who give so much of their time, and, in our county, we are very fortunate that activities are held every night of the week—including football, netball, athletics, cricket, rounders, and so on. There are excellent activities taking place, and the same is true of the Urdd, as you said, as children take part in activities on Friday evenings and Saturdays.</p>
<p>[118] Mae'r athrawon ifanc sy'n dod allan o'r colegau yn llawn brwdfrydedd, ac maent eisiau cynnal y gweithgareddau y tu allan i oriau'r ysgol. Byddai'n syniad da pe medrem roi rhyw fath o dâl iddynt am wneud y gwaith. Yr ydym ni fel athrawon—fel y gwyr rhai ohonoch—wastad wedi ei wneud yn rhad ac am ddim, oherwydd yr ydym wedi mwynhau gweithio gyda'r plant. Credaf y byddai'n beth da iddynt, yn dilyn tair blynedd o ddysgu, fagu arbenigedd drwy gynnal gweithgareddau i blant y tu allan i oriau ysgol.</p>	<p>The young teachers coming out of the colleges now are full of enthusiasm, and they want to participate in these after-school activities. It would be a good idea if we were able to give them some reward for doing this work. We, as teachers—as some of you will know—have always given of our time free of charge because we enjoy working with the pupils. It would be beneficial for them, following three years of teaching, to gain expertise by running after-school activities for the children.</p>
<p>[119] Fel y soniodd Debbie, mae cymaint o ferched yn awr yn chwarae pêl-droed, ac maent wrth eu bodd. Mae dyfodol disglair gydag athrawon yn rhoi o'u hamser, oherwydd y cytundeb pwysau gwaith a'r cynllunio, paratoi ac asesu sydd yn awr. Nid wyf yn credu bod athrawon wedi ei chael hi mor dda â hyn, oherwydd y CPA, ac felly maent yn barod i roi eu hamser. Yr ydym yn lwcus i gael yr athrawon hyn yn ein hysgolion, yn enwedig yng Nghymru—nid wyf yn dweud dim yn erbyn Lloegr—Ile mae awyrgylch arbennig, gyda'r Urdd, er</p>	<p>As Debbie said, so many girls are now taking part in football, and they are enjoying it immensely. There is a bright future with teachers giving of their time, because of the workload agreement and the planning, preparation and assessment that there is now. I do not think that teachers have ever had it so good, because of the PPA, and, therefore, they are prepared to give of their time.</p>

<p>enghraifft, ac mae'r athrawon yn barod i roi o'u hamser. Gwelwyd hyn yn Eisteddfod Genedlaethol yr Urdd, rhyw dair wythnos yn ôl, lle yr oedd cymaint o athrawon wedi peidio â chymryd gwyliau dros yr hanner tymor er mwyn mynd gyda'r plant. Yr ydym yn ffodus iawn yng Nghymru o ran hynny.</p>	<p>We are lucky to have these teachers in our schools, especially in Wales—I am not saying anything against England—where there is a special ethos, with the Urdd, for example, and teachers are willing to give of their time. You could see this as the Urdd National Eisteddfod, some three weeks ago, where so many teachers had given up their half-term week to accompany their pupils. We are fortunate in Wales in that respect.</p>
<p>[120] Owen John Thomas: Rhaid ei bod yn anodd iawn dewis timoedd lle mae plentyn â rhyw fath arbennig o anabledd. Rhaid cymysgu'r plant gyda'i gilydd weithiau, a gall hynny fod yn annheg i un tim os yw'r rhai sy'n gallu rhedeg yn gyflym mewn un tim, tra bod plant eraill mewn tim arall yn gloff, er enghraifft. Mae'n ymddangos yn gymhleth iawn trefnu pethau fel hyn. A fedrwch esbonio mwy am hynny?</p>	<p>Owen John Thomas: It must be very difficult to choose teams where a child has a particular form of disability. Sometimes you have to mix children together, which can be unfair for one team if there are some children who are good runners in one team, but there are other children in another team who are lame, for example. It appears to be very complex to organise these things. Could you explain more about that?</p>
<p>[121] Mr Clewer: I did not mention, in terms of the age banding, that we also have ability banding, which is based on A, B and C ability bands. The A band will include the more able, as such—it would be children with more minor disabilities and with higher technical ability. The C band would then include the children with a more profound disability and poor technical skills, or lower ability. It is quite a difficult operation, in terms of classifying children in teams and schools into those ability bands. However, it is certainly something that we are committed to doing because it is important that we do not just cater for those children who have a disability but are more able, but for children who have a more profound disability who want to take part. So, we have ability bands at three levels. Children and teams are classified into the three bands, and they then play within their bands at that level.</p>	
<p>[122] Owen John Thomas: Mae gennyf gwestiwn i Debbie. Mae'n anodd rhagweld y bydd timau merched y dyfodol yn chwarae yn Stadiwm y Mileniwm gyda 70,000 o bobl yn eu gwyllo. Wedi dweud hynny, o ran tenis, mae merched wedi cyrraedd lefel lle ceir stadiymau sy'n llawn o bobl yn eu gwyllo yn chwarae, ac mae pobl yn eu gwyllo ar y teledu ac yn y blaen. Nid yw hyn yn digwydd gyda phêl-droed, efallai am resymau corfforol. A ydych yn rhagweld y bydd amser pan fydd yn bosibl i ferched lenwi'r stadiymau hyn?</p>	<p>Owen John Thomas: I have a question for Debbie. It is difficult to envisage future womens' teams playing at the Millennium Stadium with 70,000 people watching them. Having said that, in tennis, women have reached a level whereby stadiums full of people watch them play, and people watch them on the television and so on. That does not happen with football—perhaps that is for physical reasons. Do you see a time when it will be possible for</p>

	women to fill those stadiums?
[123] Ms Wise: Pam lai? Yn sicr, mae'r gêm wedi datblygu llawer dros y blynyddoedd diwethaf. Rhan o fy ngwaith yw sicrhau bod proffil y gêm yn cynyddu, bod digon o ferched yn chwarae pêl-droed, a bod pobl yn gwybod beth sy'n digwydd yn y gêm. Mae pethau da yn digwydd. Pe gallem godi'r proffil yn fwy, byddai hynny o les i ni hefyd. Efallai bod hynny'n wir nid yn unig am bêl-droed, ond am nifer o bethau.	Ms Wise: Why not? The game has certainly developed a great deal in the last few years. Part of my work is to ensure that the profile of the game increases, that enough girls play football, and that people know what is going on in the game. Good things are happening. It would be beneficial if we could raise the profile even further. Perhaps that is not only true of football, but of many other things.
[124] Owen John Thomas: Ymhen sawl blwyddyn bydd hynny'n bosibl?	Owen John Thomas: In how many years will that be possible?
[125] Ms Wise: Yr ydych yn fy rhoi dan bwysau yn awr. Ni hoffwn ddweud yn awr, ond, yn sicr, bydd yn digwydd yn y dyfodol.	Ms Wise: You are putting me on the spot now. I would not like to say now, but it will certainly happen in the future.
[126] Owen John Thomas: Yn ystod y ganrif hon.	Owen John Thomas: During this century.
[127] Ms Wise: Yn sicr.	Ms Wise: Certainly.
[128] Rosemary Butler: They will not only fill the stadium, but they will win, which is the important point.	
[129] Val Lloyd: I have questions for all of the presenters. I will start with questions to Debbie. In your paper, you talk about the transition from school to club-based football. Does that prove difficult, because I know that there is a tendency for the numbers of people to drop off? At school, the football may be quite well organised, but then they perhaps have to join a club. So, do you have any way of managing that transition? I also wanted to ask about pitches. Do you share those with men's football, or are there dedicated pitches for women? I expect that that would be a bit of a luxury. Shall I ask all of my questions?	
[130] Rosemary Butler: If they are for Debbie, then ask them all.	
[131] Val Lloyd: You also, in terms of threats, talked about the relationships that you have with key stakeholders. You see that as a potential threat. Can you elaborate on that? The pressure on volunteers is very real indeed. Everyone agrees that there is a need for child protection and child protection registers, but we live in a society that has moved towards litigation. How much of a difficulty is that? I was struck by and interested in Owen John's last question about the comparability of women in tennis. However, women do not earn as much in tennis, even though they play the same games and attract the same crowds. Do you see that happening when you reach the goal that you talked about with Owen John?	

[132] **Ms Wise:** On the first question with regard to transition between schools and clubs, the participation numbers that we have collated have come from the leagues, in terms of registered players. However, having previously been an officer and a teacher, I am aware that there are a number of girls who may play in a school environment, whether on the playground or through after-school clubs with the support of the accreditation scheme. However, we are at the stage at which we need to bridge that gap for them in order for them to make the transition into clubs. I am sure that it is often the same for the boys, in that they will go if their mates will go. If their mates do not go, then they do not make that transition. So, we are trying to utilise the primary schools and the club accreditation schemes to allow that to happen in a natural, sweet, flowing movement. We do not want to make it a big deal for them; we want it to be a club, effectively. Does that make sense? So, we are trying to tackle that predominantly through the accreditation schemes, both club and school.

10.00 a.m.

[133] On question 2 on pitches, yes, we are currently sharing them with men's teams. Speaking from my experience within the senior grass-roots game, if a club is fortunate enough to have two pitches, more often than not, the females will play on the lower standard pitch. That is the reality where the pitch is in poor condition, but beggars cannot be choosers, and if we want to play football, we will play on whatever pitch they can provide for us. To be fair to the clubs, certainly some clubs have taken on board the women's and girls' game and are catering for us, and treating the men's and women's games equally, but there are still many clubs that do not quite see it that way.

[134] On question 3 on the relationships, as far as I am concerned, in the time that I have been in post, everyone whom I have come across in the game has been very supportive and positive. So, currently, that is not a threat because everyone is trying to work together to achieve the same goal. We can only achieve those goals if everyone is prepared to work together and aspire towards the same things.

[135] On question 4 regarding the pressures on volunteers, of course those pressures exist, and I understand the need for Criminal Records Bureau checks, but we are living in a culture where we have to protect the children, as well as the coaches and volunteers who work with the children. So, on the CRB process, many of the girls' clubs and the junior leagues already have club welfare officers in place. So, for the girls' game, it has not been such a shock as it may have been to some of the boys' teams. So, we have not boxed everything off, but we are pretty prepared—they are aware of the situation and the need for everyone to be CRB-checked and to follow all the procedures and the legislation.

[136] On women's football's profile and when we think we will get the same coverage as women's tennis, there was recent coverage of FIFA Women's World Cup. There is far more television coverage of the women's and girls' game today on Sky and the BBC than there has ever been. Personally, I think that it is more of a question of 'when' and not 'if'. We will persevere; we can get there only through perseverance and everyone working together to allow us to reach that stage. To be fair, the seniors have done exceptionally well; they are playing in the World Cup qualifiers. They have done well in their group, so who knows?

[137] **Rosemary Butler:** The interesting point is that it is not just down to television, but also the local printed media. If you look at the sports section of newspapers, they usually contain news of men's sporting activities; they rarely include women. So, we need to continue working on that. In fact, we have raised that issue in this committee before.

[138] Val, can we move on? If you could limit the number of your questions,

we will come back at the end, if there is more time.

[139] **Val Lloyd:** I will ask Jamie a quick question and then I will move on to the WSFA. You talked about your promotion when you go to special schools—and perhaps I could have a word with you outside committee on that, because there are a couple of things that I am interested in—but many pupils with disabilities are in mainstream schools rather than special schools, so how do you manage to reach those?

[140] **Mr Clewer:** I mentioned that we had recently not redesigned but amended the McDonald's/FAW Trust primary school accreditation scheme, which is now delivered to—off the top of my head—500 primary schools across Wales. I mentioned that that has to be inclusive of disability, and that includes schools that are not special schools or units. There is now an opportunity for schools to access additional disability-specific equipment to integrate those children into the sessions. We also have many festivals, where, hopefully, our officers will identify children from mainstream schools who can come to those disability festivals and take part with their peers.

[141] As I mentioned, we now also have a disability workshop; we hope to educate teachers and coaches to be more aware of disability-specific issues, and to integrate those children. In a perfect world, we would love all children with a disability to be integrated into a mainstream structure. It is important that we give all individuals that knowledge of integrating children. So, there is provision there for children in mainstream schools, through the accreditation programme.

[142] **Val Lloyd:** I have a question for whoever wants to answer from the WSFA. I am sorry, but I am not certain of your relationship—formal or informal—to other national bodies. Could you help me on that a little? You mentioned that, financially, there were difficulties, and that you were, in the main, self-funding. Does that come from parents or schools—do parents provide transport? I know that people such as you give of your time freely, but what other aspects of self-funding are there?

[143] **Mr Ashford:** On our relationship between other national bodies, the WSFA is probably the oldest association providing the types of opportunities that we have been giving to children. The relationship prior to the existence of the trust was through the FA—there was a working relationship at that time, but it was limited. The FA could see that we were providing opportunities for children from the age of four, but it was more interested in the categories for the ages from 11 to 16 and to 18, because it could then identify the players.

[144] However, since the trust came into being, we have had a strong relationship with it. Initially, there was some uncertainty about how it was going to proceed, because there were a few changes in the trust—I believe that we have worked with four people in Neil's situation in a matter of four or five years, so there was not much continuity. However, the relationship has grown, and it is very much a partnership of equal partners; it has to be, because the WSFA has much experience, and many organisations within it that have been going for many years. I know that the trust personnel—Neil's colleagues, and so on—are envious of that, because it is a structure that has been in place for many years. The trust has been able to come into that structure, and work within it. So, for instance, we had the regional set-ups before hand, we had the district set-ups, as well as the association set-ups; we also have close relationships with the professional clubs. As you can appreciate, particularly in north Wales, there are about 10 premierships teams within a blanket throw of each other. It was hard work getting them on board to work alongside us, but that has been successful.

[145] So, at present, the agreement between the trust and us is to be reviewed, and a few things need to be ironed out. However, I can see us going forward in that, because it is an important partnership. It is a partnership of trust—not the FAW Trust, but ‘trust’. The WSFA and the FAW Trust need to trust each other, and work side by side; there is a future in that. We are very appreciative of Neil’s work, and that of his predecessors, in that they have been able to help us financially with running the international sides, of which we are very proud.

[146] On the financial aspects, you are right that so much is asked of parents. I feel proud of the parents of our children—they provide so much for them financially. At the age of 13, children are identified for the national squads, and parents must take them from place to place, perhaps three or four times a term, taking them for get-togethers, training, matches, and so on. They have been fortunate in the last few months, particularly this year, because everything is down in south Wales—mainly because of the Welsh Institute of Sport, and I believe that Neil is the main reason for that, because of his association with the WIS. Therefore, many parents have to spend a lot of money on transport, bed-and-breakfast accommodation, and everything else, which is a financial constraint on them.

[147] However, for us, the parents do not pay anything to the WSFA—that is done via the schools. The schools affiliate to the WSFA to take part in its competitions; that is how we get the money in. People like me, Dave Nickless and Keith will then stand around doing raffles and draws, and make programmes. When I think back to the years when we used to do our internationals independently of the trust, Mr Nickless and I once raised £9,500 in three international games to give to the WSFA. So, that is the type of thing that we have always done.

10.10 a.m.

[148] We have been very much dependent on affiliation fees from the schools, but the parents do not pay anything towards the cost. However, in the old days, they used to purchase the kit. In fact, they still have to contribute towards the cost of the kit, but they keep it at the end of the season. So, there is a slight financial bias for the parents, but it is mostly from the schools and volunteers.

[149] **Rosemary Butler:** Today is the first time that I have seen you without a raffle book to sell. You will probably sell them at the door on your way out.
[*Laughter.*]

[150] **Laura Anne Jones:** We should take this opportunity to congratulate the women’s football team on all its successes to date. That has been fantastic, and it has raised the profile of women’s football in Wales considerably. For me, it is wonderful to see that women’s football is so encouraged now. When I was at comprehensive school not so far away from here, I was not allowed to play football or rugby because I was a girl, which frustrated me a lot, as I am very interested in those sports. So, I am delighted for, if a little jealous of, the girls who can play now. In terms of Owen John’s point, are women footballers being paid enough at the top levels for it to be their sole profession? Are there childcare facilities and everything else that is required?

[151] **Ms Wise:** Paid? They do not get paid anything.

[152] **Laura Anne Jones:** So it is a big difference when compared with male footballers. Would you like to see that change?

[153] **Ms Wise:** Oh, that is a tough one. You have put me on the spot. As it stands, perhaps we need to ensure that we are strong, foundation wise, all the way through. I am conscious that we should not run before we can walk. For the future, however, it would be great.

[154] Laura Anne Jones: Do you think that it has a lot do with your media profile?
[155] Ms Wise: As I highlighted in the paper and reinforced today, when you compare the amount of coverage that women's and girls' sport gets with that of men's sport, you see that ours is minimal. So, more coverage would certainly help us to raise our profile even more.
[156] Laura Anne Jones: May I ask Jamie Clewer—
[157] Rosemary Butler: If you ask all your questions in one go, we can then go on to the next Member.
[158] Laura Anne Jones: Okay. I wanted to ask Mr Clewer about the sustainability of disability football. From what I have seen from going around special schools, and so on, I think that transport is the key to getting them out there to play any type of sport. I have done a lot to recognise the work of the Lord's Taverners association, and many schools have to rely on it to provide the minibuses, trampolines or whatever else, so that those children can play. In this day and age, that is wrong, quite frankly. It should come from the Government, and I hope that it will, eventually. How many staff do you have on the ground who are trained to coach disability football?
[159] Our Social Justice and Regeneration Committee got me thinking the other day about changing room facilities at football grounds, and so on. Are they adapted for disabled children, and so on?
[160] Mr Clewer: Picking up on the point on people who are able to work with disability as such, we have now trained 60 coaches through our coach education programme specifically to deliver on disability. We must not underestimate the work of the Federation of Disability Sport Wales, because it has provided thousands of generic training opportunities to train individuals to work within disability. However, we believe that disability football is no different from mainstream football, and if you have the get up and go to do coaching awards that are mainstream, such as our football leaders and other higher awards, you have the skill and ability to coach children with a disability. That is where our awareness workshop comes in, and our future practical approach is to build on that coaching knowledge to make it specific to disability. I do not particularly feel that it is a separate area as such—anyone who is trained to coach can also work with disabled players.
[161] Rosemary Butler: And what about the changing facilities?
[162] Mr Clewer: As an organisation, we are keen that we use only suitable facilities; I always make sure that I check a facility before we use it. Generally, the level of facilities is improving, and most sports facilities and leisure centres have what should now be called an accessible toilet, as opposed to a disabled toilet. So, that provision is there as well. A lot of strides forward have been taken on widening access in terms of doorways and lifts. So, it is much better, but there is still a lot of work to be done, particularly in more rural areas, where the public funds are not necessarily available to develop facilities, so those lag slightly behind. However, it is an improving picture.
[163] Rosemary Butler: We can take that up with the Welsh Local Government Association when it comes here.
[164] Laura Anne Jones: I will move on to my final questions. I noticed in your paper—it is on page 5 of our copies—that, in the future, you would like to see centres of excellence set up in each unitary authority. I just wondered where you saw the funding coming from for that, and also, to sneak in another one, travelling is an issue that has already been mentioned, as well as the costs for parents, which you have just covered, more or less. However, it is a concern of mine across the board that poorer families cannot afford for their children to do a lot of sport. I swam, that was my beef, and my parents had to

keep paying out, and it is an expensive business.

[165] **Mr Ashford:** To go back to your first point on the unitary authority set-up, we would like to see something done about fragmentation—and I think that I am right in saying that it is what most people would want to see—because there is too much fragmentation, at the moment, because there is the school situation, the league clubs and the trust and there are Dragon Sports officers and football development officers and so on. It is not uniform throughout Wales. If the situation were uniform throughout Wales, there would be an opportunity to do that, but, if you look at the league system, you will see that there is no uniformity. Mr Nickless did some research the other day, and out of the original Welsh Premier clubs, 19 have now gone and there are new ones instead. You can never know whether a club will be there in two years' time. So you cannot work on the basis of clubs.

[166] However, if you worked on a unitary-authority basis and looked at the 22 unitary authorities, I think that you could set up a satellite-type of situation. Many of our premiership clubs have tried to get satellites in Wales for many years, as you know, but it would be a satellite in which every stakeholder would be involved. The funding of it has to be shared by all. The problem that we would have, as the WSFA, is that, because we have no money, we could not put anything in, but if we had money then we could become a stakeholder, which we would certainly wish to be, and then we could put in our pennyworth. If you had everyone working together in one unitary authority, all the children would know that it was one area. They would not have to 'sign' to a club. These days, unfortunately, as I am sure that you are aware, clubs sign up youngsters, so, if a professional club comes along, it has to pay for them. I am a firm believer that every child should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential, whatever it is—hopefully to play for Wales, that is what we want—but the child should not be restricted, because, if children have potential, they should be allowed to move, regardless of what a club wants, when they are aged between six and 13 years. It is getting ridiculous.

[167] So, I would like to see unitary authorities have this satellite, which would be manned by the FAW Trust, school teachers, coaches, Dragon Sport personnel and everyone else who is associated. Children would have access to that. They would, for instance, be able to take advantage of the competitions organisation that is already set up though the Welsh Schools Football Association. Those competitions are already there and the organisation is already there, but instead of Flintshire schools or Wrexham schools, for instance, taking part in that competition, it would be the Wrexham unitary authority satellite. Children would be representing their authority in these competitions.

[168] They would be made up of the trust, the WSFA and leagues, if there are leagues in that area, and anything else. However, if the league in that area dropped out of the Welsh Premier League, it would not stop. If the FAW Trust personnel moved on to better things, it would not stop. If the WSFA personnel went on to become something else, it would not stop, because there would be so many stakeholders. It would not be dependent on one person.

[169] In fact, if you look back over the last 12 years, the only consistent aspect in the international squad has been WSFA involvement, because people move on. I am sure that Neil knows that some of his very good people move on to better things, as is the case in our situation. However, you must have

continuity of practice—that is important. That is why I see the unitary authority situation working.

[170] **Rosemary Butler:** It might be helpful if you were to do what Eleanor asked and provide us with a chart—

[171] **Mr Ashford:** I was going to ask, Chair, by when you would like that in.

[172] **Rosemary Butler:** Whenever it is convenient.

[173] **Mr Ashford:** A fortnight?

[174] **Rosemary Butler:** We are going into the autumn, so, a fortnight would be fine. We are now beginning to run rather late, so if you could just finish off.

10.20 a.m.

[175] **Mr Ashford:** I will just answer that last question quickly. I am very aware of the financial implications for parents and we go out of our way on that issue. The Chair is quite right, when I do my little get-togethers with raffle tickets, it is usually to give a parent some money to pay for travel costs. The big issue for me, being a north Walian, is that everything is held down in south Wales. Every time something is on, it is in south Wales. Therefore, for those parents it is a major issue.

[176] **Rosemary Butler:** I think that that point was made earlier. Neil Ward is here, who has been with us before. Neil, do you want to make some quick comments that would help to clarify the position for the committee before we move on to the staff from the Office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales?

[177] **Mr Ward:** I have just two points of clarification. On the competition structures and the player development structure, that is something that we are very conscious of. The FAW has charged the trust with looking at this, and a review and working group have been established to look at it, and to consult with key stakeholders and groups to determine what might be the best structure going forward. So that is currently under way and we are aware of it. On disadvantage in terms of travelling arrangements, we have very much benefited in recent years from a logistic disadvantage fund, which is provided by the Sports Council for Wales. Cledwyn might not be aware of this, but all parents of players who are involved in the national development squads receive recompense for the travel costs that they incur in order to attend squad sessions.

[178] **Rosemary Butler:** That is very helpful information. I just want to make one point—

[179] **Eleanor Burnham:** Could we clarify who Mr Ward is?

[180] **Rosemary Butler:** Mr Ward is here from the FAW Trust and he gave evidence to the committee in Swansea. Sorry, it was here that he gave evidence. I apologise; I thought that I had introduced him at the beginning, Eleanor.

[181] **Eleanor Burnham:** I might have missed it, Chair.

[182] **Rosemary Butler:** I do not want to raise the issue now, but perhaps Debbie could let us have a bit more information. Debbie, you included 'inconsistent rules' in your list of weaknesses. I do not want that discussion this morning, but maybe you could prepare a little note on what you meant by 'inconsistent rules'.

[183] We are going to move on now to the staff from the office of the children's commissioner. There has been a little confusion, so they were not here at the beginning of the meeting. That is a bit unfortunate, because it means that they have not heard the discussion. Would it be possible for you to

move along a little so that Mr Hosking is not hanging over the end of the table? That would be helpful. Please make your presentation and then we will ask questions. Introduce yourselves, if you would, please.

[184] **Mr Hosking:** I am Peter Hosking, the senior policy officer at the Office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales and Gareth Jones is a policy officer. The commissioner has taken quite a large interest in football, partly because we have had consultation events with young people, asking them what our priorities should be for the forthcoming financial year, and play and leisure came out at the top of their concerns, closely followed by education, so we will be consulting further as to how we look into such things in more detail. Also, the commissioner's office runs an advice and support service, whereby young people and concerned adults can phone in and get advice and support. Many of the issues that we are going to be talking about will have come from the concerns that were brought to the office. I suppose that our greatest concern is about child protection in sports in general and, in particular, in football. We recognise that a lot of people work in the Football Association of Wales and I think that it was Huw Jones, the chief executive, who said that we have a large voluntary sector, much of which is untrained and unqualified. We have concerns as to whether the lack of training and qualification extends to child protection procedures.

[185] **Rosemary Butler:** Did you refer to Huw Jones as the chief executive of FAW?

[186] **Mr Hosking:** Sorry; he is the chief executive of the Sports Council for Wales.

[187] We would also note that in the recent safeguarding children review, which was headed up by Gwenda Thomas, one of the recommendations was that the Sports Council for Wales should review its present policy regarding child protection and make grant funding to sports organisations conditional upon child protection procedures and routine Criminal Records Bureau checks being in place. That is our major concern in sports in general, in that there seems to be rather a lack of robust child protection procedures. We have also been approached by many parents and young people and the young people would like to play for a team in a different local authority, which is apparently not allowed, because they might feel that the standards are better in another club. Parents have approached us in much the same respect in that they feel that their children cannot reach their full potential in one club and would prefer to see them playing in another club. As an office, we do not really have a view on this, as it prevents children from having to travel large distances to play football, and that can only be a good thing. However, those are concerns that have been brought to us and we would suggest that children should have a right to choose and should not necessarily be bound by completely artificial boundaries, although we feel that the travelling of hundreds of miles to join a club that is outside of their area is not necessarily a good thing.

[188] Other concerns that have been brought to us by people who work within football are around the fact that children are sometimes seen as commodities and are bound to contracts at a very early age, when, probably, in the courts, they would not be seen to have competence to make that decision, according to what used to be the Gillick competence, which are now called Fraser guidelines. Of course, it is not the children who sign these contracts, but the parents and, unfortunately, we find that parents do not always act in children's best interests. You can imagine a child at a very young age, who shows an aptitude, being bound to a club by a contract and then not being able to move to another club very easily and, yet, at that age, children want to change their minds quite frequently. So, that concern has also been brought to the office.

[189] We have also had concerns that the levels of football in England are better, I suppose, than those in Wales and that drains away a lot of the Welsh talent. So, we would welcome an increase in the standards in Wales, which would allow young people to feel that they were reaching their full potential in football. I am sure that there will now be questions.

[190] **Rosemary Butler:** Yes, well that is why we are all here: to help improve the position in terms of the quality of sport and facilities across Wales. Could you just clarify—as I may have misunderstood—the issue about children having to travel hundreds of miles to join a club? Could you give us a bit more about that one?

[191] **Mr Hosking:** Young people have approached the office saying that they do not want to play for their local club because the standard is not good enough and that they want to play for one some distance away, which means that they often have to do a lot of travelling in order to play, which is stressful. The other issue is that, sometimes, children are pressured into playing for more than one club, because they have a particular aptitude and that, we have been advised, is not necessarily good for them at a time when their bodies are developing, as it can put a lot of physical stress on them and also put emotional stress on them in terms of allegiances to one club and another, which can cause problems. These issues have been brought to the office.

[192] **Rosemary Butler:** I will ask, if Members agree, for comments from the other side of the table. There must be structures to run any sort of football. We had a lot of talk this morning about child protection and there are quite robust procedures in place, so we are very pleased to hear that this morning. Would somebody like to make a comment on this issue about being forced to play for one club when you really want to play for another one?

10.30 a.m.

[193] **Mr Ward:** I would like to comment on that, thank you. It is a difficult issue. Young players register with clubs affiliated to leagues and leagues work to boundary areas. The leagues have tried to put rules in place that prevent other clubs from pooling talent, in other words, identifying better players from other clubs to come to one team so that we have, in effect, a team for which all the best players play. So, there is inappropriate competition. That is why those rules are in place. I am aware of one incident in which there was a difficulty with a player, who could not play with his friends in school because he lived outside the boundary, and that made it difficult for him. That is where, perhaps, some flexibility has to be considered, and what is in the best interests of the young player concerned. However, the rules are set to prevent overzealous members or managers of clubs from identifying the very best players and avoid inappropriate competition with clubs in other areas.

[194] In terms of child protection, I would like to add some confidence about what football is doing in Wales. Through the support of the trust, the FAW has established a welfare and child protection policy in 2002, and was one of the first governing bodies to have such a comprehensive policy established. It has a welfare and child protection department established within the Football Association of Wales, and it has very strong links to Steve Boocock of the NSPCC, so, where cases of child protection emerge, they are very much managed in consultation with the NSPCC.

[195] Previously, all coaches in Wales coming on to the trust coach education courses undertook self-declarations to ensure that they were given the chance to declare any previous convictions that they may have had, and the FAW would then determine whether that prevented them from working with young children. The FAW has now decided that everyone who has substantial contact with children in football will undergo a Criminal Records Bureau declaration, and a licensing process is being established from September, under which all

coaches will have to have an identified licence similar to the one that I am wearing now, with their name, qualification and CRB number on it. All that is very much in hand, and we are putting as many robust procedures as we can in place to ensure that the welfare of young players is protected. I congratulate the FAW for taking this matter so seriously.

[196] **Rosemary Butler:** Debbie, you made a point earlier that you already have a person in place.

[197] **Ms Wise:** To be fair, what Neil just said confirms that.

[198] **Mr Ashford:** Certainly, from the schools' perspective, Chair, all personnel undergo enhanced CRB checks, and they have to have those before they can work with any child in the school system, as you know. All WSFA personnel have that.

[199] Going to the situation with regard to travelling to clubs, that is worse for us in north Wales where, for instance, you might have somebody living on the outskirts of Pwllheli who wants to go to Manchester United, or whatever the case may be. The English FA has policies in place, as does the Welsh FA, that restrict travelling, and it is a double-edged sword in that, on the one hand, you have parents who want to take their children to the Manchester Uniteds and the Birmingham's or wherever, while, on the other hand, you have them saying that the children are tired when they go to school the next day; that just does not make sense to me. This is a personal statement, and not a statement on behalf of the WSFA; but I do not think that anyone under the age of 10 should be travelling to any of these clubs anyway. Certainly, as I said earlier, they should not have to sign, and then be restricted in movement—that is totally out of order.

[200] However, we do have that problem in north Wales, but some of Neil's personnel, for instance, work in Gwynedd and they provide excellent coaching. Terry Boyle, who is established in Gwynedd, is one of the finest coaches that I have ever seen, and he is based in Gwynedd. If we had these unitary authority situations in place, they would have quality coaching. They would still, however, want to go to Manchester United, Everton, Liverpool, Birmingham or wherever, because they would get free shirts, boots or whatever. However, I think that it is important that young children below that age should remain in a certain radius—it is scandalous to take them twice or three times a week to play 100 miles away. That is a personal view.

[201] **Mr Nickless:** To elaborate on that, Members may not realise that, for want of a better term, there is a transfer system within professional football clubs called compensation. If a child as young as eight signs for a football club, and is there for four or five years and, on reaching 13, wishes to go to what he or his parents see to be a better football club, and the club that he previously signed for does not wish to release him, the only way for him to go is for the other club to pay compensation or a transfer fee for the work that the first club has done with him for those five years. It could be that a club may not be willing, or may not have the financial power to be able to pay that money for the child to move; so, the child's movement is then restricted. The interesting thing is that once that child reaches 18 years of age and is offered a professional contract by a football club, he can then say, 'I do not want it; I want to go to somewhere else', and no fee will change hands. So, people who are 18 years of age work under entirely different rules to children under 18 years of age. As the gentleman said, I do not think that that would stand up if taken to a court of law, because a minor cannot sign a contract.

[202] **Rosemary Butler:** Thank you. That is obviously something that we need to look at further down the line; certainly in terms of advice to parents and pressures on parents. We can have a look at that at a future date. That was very helpful. Do any Members want to make any points? Eleanor?

[203] **Eleanor Burnham:** It seems to me that the issue that Peter Hosking raised about quality—that people sometimes believe or perceive that quality is better in England—is something that we are trying to address through this review. The improvement of standards, generally, and whether or not the facilities, which we have heard of, are up to scratch, is the only long-term issue that we have to address, is it not? Then, everything else will fall into place. I used to deal with truants and miscreants—14 to 16-year-olds—across north-east Wales before I came to the Assembly, and it is just incredible that their only aim in life was to emulate Manchester United or whatever. We have a lot to build in Wales to get rid of the perception that we are not up to scratch. I know that these fine folk, who have been presenting to us, are doing their best. This is why we are here; we are here to try to help.

[204] **Rosemary Butler:** Yes; our idea for doing the review is to have a snapshot in time. We can then look at where the holes are and make recommendations to the Minister or the Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, or whomever in the Assembly. Did you want to speak again, Cledwyn?

[205] **Mr Ashford:** Interestingly, Chair, we have the opposite now. At the moment, we have English-born players wanting to play for Wales. In the last four years, I think that we have had seven of what we call 'Anglos' wanting to play for Wales because their parents live in Wales. The success of the last couple of years is down to one or two of those Anglos being particularly good players who have wanted to play for Wales and, in fact, have already played for Wales under 17, 19 and 21 years of age. So, it is nice to have them wanting to come to play for us.

[206] **Rosemary Butler:** We are not going to get into a grannygate situation, are we? [*Laughter.*]

[207] **Mr Ashford:** No—[*Inaudible.*]

[208] **Rosemary Butler:** Do any other Members want to ask questions? No? Thank you, everyone. It has been a very interesting morning. I am sure that Members will want to have an individual chat with you outside; but avoid Cledwyn, because he has his raffle tickets. Thank you very much, Neil, for coming back again. That was very interesting, and thank you for your observations this morning.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 10.38 a.m. ac 11.00 a.m.
The meeting adjourned between 10.38 a.m. and 11.00 a.m.*

Doc37

Thursday, 28 September 2006

**Yr Adolygiad o Bêl-droed
The Football Review**

[6] **Rosemary Butler:** Item 3 is another evidence-taking session for our football review. As you know, we were due to have representatives here from the Football Association of Wales this morning, but we received a letter on 19 September to say that they were not coming. It is a great disappointment, as we were all looking forward to meeting, I assume, Mr Collins and some members of his board, who were to come to talk to us. They have suggested that they would be happy to meet us, so I propose that we rearrange our agenda for the next meeting, on 11 October, and offer them the opportunity to come on that day. We will be taking evidence in public and, therefore, we will have to have translation and recording facilities, so we could offer the board the opportunity to come to our next meeting. Are you happy with that? I see that you are. We will look at the rest of that agenda for next time, to see how we can rearrange it. In the meantime, I thought that it might be helpful to write to the FAW with some of the questions that we might wish to put to them, just as a guide. Are you happy with that? I see that you are.

[7] We will therefore look at the questions. These are just some suggestions. I think that it might be helpful if we asked them what the key issues in football in Wales are. I see that you agree. We can work on these, and firm up the wording.

9.20 a.m.

[8] We have had the FAW's mission statement, and I thought that it might be helpful if we asked the officials to beef up a little on that. We would particularly like to ask what its contribution to youth and development programmes is. As we all know, more people play football on the streets and in the parks of Wales than any other game, so it would be quite helpful to know how it is contributing to youth and development generally. Are you happy with that?

[9] What else could we ask? It might also be helpful if we asked them to give us an idea of the FAW's strategic plan for the future. Are you comfortable with that? I think that investment in clubs and how it prioritises that kind of investment across Wales might also be beneficial for us to know. Are you happy with that?

Are there any other questions? It will be a free discussion when they come, but I just thought that it might be helpful if we put some questions to them. What about how they see their role as the governing body of football in Wales? Is that what you mentioned earlier, Laura? Perhaps we could send just those four questions as an outline of the kinds of things that we would like to talk to them about. Of course, they can talk to us about anything they like, and we will be delighted to meet them.

[10] **Laura Anne Jones:** Can I just put on record how disappointed I am that they are not with us today. I was quite looking forward to asking questions of them about football in Wales. I thought they would form an integral part of our review, and I was hoping that they would want to form an integral part of our review. So, I do hope that they take up our second offer and come to our next meeting.

[11] **Rosemary Butler:** I think that everyone would agree with that. Does anyone else want to make a comment? I see not. We offered them several dates, and we hoped that they would come today, on 28 September. In fact, as far as I was concerned, they were coming, but then on 19 September, we had a letter saying that they had a specific board meeting to discuss the issue and so they had decided not to come today, but that they would be quite happy to meet us, as we are always happy to meet them. Of course, we need these meetings here in public, with proper translation facilities. So, let us look forward to 11 October. Does anyone else have anything to add on that?

[12] **Owen John Thomas:** The FAW has had sole control of football in Wales since it was formed, which is over a hundred years ago. Obviously, it feels a little uncomfortable about another body, such as the National Assembly, interfering—as it seems to perceive it. I am not agreeing with it, but I think that we need to show that we are interested in the game and are not in any way trying to usurp its authority. As long as we create that feeling and understanding, we should be able to hold a meeting with officials and take things forward.

[13] **Rosemary Butler:** Yes, and we here are just doing a snapshot of football in Wales.

[14] **Val Lloyd:** I agree with what has been said, Chair. Ours is a very different role from that of the FAW and it would be a real shame if it did not contribute to the Assembly's football review. It should consider our role as complementary and not as opposed. I

look forward to its officials coming on 11 October.

[15] **Rosemary Butler:** Does anyone else have any comments? I did have informal discussions with Mr Collins before the review started in which I talked about the aims of the review. I explained that we needed a snapshot of football across Wales—from local authority provision, through to youth clubs and women's football, as well as a range of other things. The FAW has this huge overarching role as it is the governing body of the sport in Wales, so there is no question of our trying to interfere, riding roughshod over it. We are trying to see how we can help to develop football across Wales. Thank you for that, Owen John, I think that it is very important that we lay that down. Is there anything else on that, then? I see that there is not. So, we will look forward to the response from the FAW.

[16] We were going to move on to item 4, but as we are a little ahead of ourselves, the relevant officials have not arrived. We will therefore go on to item 5. Are you happy to do that, Minister?

[17] **Alun Pugh:** Yes.

[18] **Rosemary Butler:** We will then come back to digitising cultural heritage.

9.25 a.m.

Yr Adolygiad o Bêl-droed The Football Review

[135] **Rosemary Butler:** As you know we were due to have the Football Association of Wales here earlier in the meeting. We rearranged the time especially, because its representatives had to go off somewhere this afternoon. The Union of European Football Associations was due to come—in fact, it was so keen to come that it wanted to bring two people—but after we had the letter from the FAW, we contacted UEFA to see if it was still coming. It decided that it would not attend; no reason was given. It may have been that, because one of its members was not coming to the meeting, it felt that it should not come either. We are very disappointed about that, because it was very keen to come to the meeting. We will circulate the questions that we have agreed to send to the FAW this afternoon to make sure that Members are happy with them. We also have some lines of questioning for UEFA, and we think that we should write to it to

ask it some specific points. We will also circulate those to make sure that everyone is happy with them.

[136] I will read out the proposed questions and then we can have a look at them. The first question is: 'What does UEFA consider to be its role and what does it expect from national federations, particularly Wales, especially in terms of governance and leadership?' We are not sure what UEFA's role is. We also suggested asking how closely UEFA works with national federations and clubs in helping them to comply with UEFA regulations. That will be quite interesting. Another question is: 'What funding is given to Wales and for what purpose is this funding given?' and 'How are recipients of UEFA moneys monitored?' We understand that there is money from UEFA for a development role, so that is a suggested question. Another question is 'What can Governments do to contribute to the development of football without being considered by UEFA or FIFA to be intervening inappropriately?' We are not trying to intervene, but there has been a suggestion in the press that we are trying to intervene, and other countries' Governments have intervened considerably. Therefore, we are interested in that aspect. Another question is 'Does UEFA offer guidance and flexibility in the interpretation of standards for club youth academies?' For example, could clubs run academies in conjunction with other bodies or could they be run on a regional basis? It is done in different ways in different countries. So, those are some suggested lines of questioning. I ask Members to consider those and, at the end of this session, you can bring up anything else that you can think of or we can amend those questions as you feel appropriate. Once we have agreed that, we will circulate letters this afternoon and get them sent off today.

[137] As I said, we are disappointed that UEFA changed its mind about coming, but we are delighted that we have the Welsh Local Government Association here this morning, and also Ann Jones, who has kindly agreed to give us some evidence. The WLGA has already sent us a very helpful document, which is very interesting. After the initial statement, we would like to have a discussion about that document. Chris, can you introduce your team?

[138] **Dr Llewelyn:** Thank you for the opportunity to give evidence to the committee's review of football in Wales. It is a pleasure for the association, and never a chore—we are very pleased to be here. As you indicated, I am here representing the Welsh Local Government Association, which represents the 22

local authorities in Wales on a national level. So, in that sense, to draw a footballing analogy, our chief executive Steve Thomas is the local government equivalent of John Toshack in representing local government at a national level. Just as John Toshack is going into the forthcoming European championship qualifying rounds without some of his star strikers, including Ryan Giggs, we are here today without two of our star strikers, namely councillors John Hopkins and Nigel Daniels, our spokesperson and deputy spokesperson on leisure. They have asked me to convey their apologies to the committee because they cannot be here today due to other engagements. However, we are ably supported by a team of reserves, shall I say, from the lower divisions. [*Laughter.*] We have Trevor Gough, chief officer for culture, leisure and parks at Cardiff County Council, who is also a WLGA adviser, and whose work we value very much as an association. It gives us that sort of operational detail and information that we need, as an association. Also present is Heledd Tomos, who is the policy officer for leisure, culture and language. That is our team that will be giving evidence to you this morning. Our evidence will be given in two halves: the first half will be a summary, on my part, of the written submission on our position and, in the second half, hopefully Heledd and Trevor will tackle some of the more difficult questions that you may ask, operating in a sweeper role as it were. I will kick off—[*Laughter.*]

11.00 a.m.

[139] **Rosemary Butler:** I warn you now that if you make any more football puns, we will be scoring you and striking you out.

[140] **Ann Jones:** You will be given a yellow card.

[141] **Owen John Thomas:** Have you got any yellow cards, Chair?

[142] **Rosemary Butler:** I need red ones for you, Owen John.

[143] **Dr Llewelyn:** I will quickly summarise our position in terms of the submission that we have made. I think that everyone knows that football is one of the largest participation sports in Wales, because of the ease with which a game can be held—it does not need specialist equipment, you can play it relatively anywhere and, therefore, there are no problems in terms of venue, it is relatively cheap and so on. Partly, as a consequence of that, from a local authority perspective, it forms a central part of local authority service provision.

[144] There are two themes to local authority provision: the first is to increase participation in football, particularly among young people and children, and the second is to try to raise the standard of play in football in Wales. Local authorities increase participation by providing support for primary schools; helping them to become accredited by the football association; providing opportunities for pupils at both primary and secondary level to take part in school football through various leagues and festivals; trying to raise standards in girls' football; and by providing an extra-curricular dimension and playing opportunities for children in Wales. On the second element, trying to raise standards, the role that local government plays involves trying to improve coaching and playing standards in existing junior clubs; helping to establish new clubs; helping existing clubs to improve their facilities and gain access to new equipment and so on; developing opportunities for coaches to improve their qualifications; and creating opportunities for talented players to progress through the system, through the various academies and centres for development and so on.

[145] In terms of the strengths of the current system, I think that we would all agree that amateur football in Wales is vital for the development of the sport. There are hundreds of clubs signed up to the FAW Trust's accreditation scheme across Wales. There has been a significant increase in qualified registered coaches over the last few years through the various schemes, including the coach education programme, which is ratified by the Union of European Football Associations. There has also been considerable progress with junior-level football in recent years and, again, we have continued with the improvements in coaching levels. As far as we can see, that trend could easily continue into the future, although we believe that a lack of adequate funding is a potential impediment to that development and there needs to be greater consistency across Wales on that issue.

[146] Girls' football has seen significant growth in recent years, with something like a 300 per cent increase. Engaging local junior clubs and developing an accreditation scheme, which stipulates the provision of football for girls, has helped to stimulate this increase. However, it has to be said that participation levels remain low; although the increase is significant, it is starting from a low base, so we need to look at how those opportunities can be increased.

[147] I will turn to the key concerns of local government. We feel that there needs to be better support and funding for junior and

grass-roots football, for both men and women. We feel that we need to ensure that local authority football development officers are able to spend their time more constructively developing the sport at a local level, ensuring that they are able to increase participation levels. Football development officers are not available to all authorities; the position is very patchy as a consequence of reductions in funding from the FAW Trust. Some authorities have continued to fund some of these development posts in spite of the loss of funding from the FAW Trust. There is concern, because we feel that there are opportunities to contribute to the 'Climbing Higher' agenda, and other Assembly Government agendas, which have been missed because of those lost opportunities. There is also the fact that the development officers are contracted to the FAW, and some of their time is spent on their contractual obligations with the FAW Trust.

[148] Another issue, which we think needs to be addressed, is the training of referees and officials in junior football, especially in terms of increasing the capacity to deal with increasing club membership, increasing the number of girls playing football, and overall participation rates.

[149] I think that we also feel that there should be better linkage, and a greater level of engagement, between football and the wider education agenda, and a more imaginative examination of how football can link to developing education agendas—the whole basic skills dimension. I think that this is one of those areas that we could look at more creatively and more effectively.

[150] Another area of concern for local authorities is the condition of pitches. Again, as I think that everyone realises, local authorities are, by a long way, the main provider of football pitches throughout the country. The scale of it is very significant. I think that there is a problem in terms of the maintenance and the upkeep of the pitches. There has been a gradual decline over time. So, I think that, with the realistic expectation that funding in future years will be increasingly difficult, with the possibility of problems with lottery funding and the funding that comes from the sports council, there is an issue that needs to be addressed. Most pitches only receive a minimum of maintenance and care. The quality continues to decline at a time when expectations are increasing and the standards and demands that are made on the football pitches are increasing.

[151] Those are, broadly, the views that are contained in our submission. The conclusion, in a sense, is that there are many

issues that need to be addressed but that the way forward is greater collaboration and joint working between the key partners—the stakeholders—in football in Wales. We need to see the proverbial issue of more joined-up working but a greater coherence and a sense of direction.

[152] Football is the most popular sporting game in the world, let alone in Wales. As an association, we believe that there are significant opportunities to address some of the targets within the 'Climbing Higher' strategy, and also other issues, such as social inclusion, the education agenda, basic skills and so forth. We feel that more needs to be done to develop and promote the sport within Wales in a more coherent way while, at the same time, ensuring access and participation. So, in a sense, we want a clear strategic direction from Government, strong partnerships at local level, and adequate development funding to ensure that everyone—all the stakeholders—within football are working to the same aims and are aiming for the same targets.

[153] **Rosemary Butler:** Thank you. I think that you, Val, indicated that you wanted to speak.

11.10 a.m.

[154] **Val Lloyd:** Thank you. Last Thursday, I was very privileged to have been invited to see a visually impaired youth team practising in Swansea. They had an indoor coaching area and I thought that I was going to see a match, but I saw them learning and practising skills. I was hugely impressed by the team's ethos and by the cohesion of the parents, who took their children there every week. The parents helped set up a supporters' group and were moving things forward. It reminded me, linking into previous items, of a tournament for ethnic minorities that I had seen at Swansea's indoor centre. Could you comment on what you think should be done to increase access and participation for these groups?

[155] **Dr Llewellyn:** I am sure that Trevor could tell you what is happening in Cardiff.

[156] **Mr Gough:** I will come on now as a substitution. You have mentioned two target groups: people with disabilities and minority ethnic communities. The challenge for local government is that we have a restricted number of staff—in the case of Cardiff, we have one football development officer—who are presented with conflicting and challenging priorities. The scale of football in a place like Cardiff is massive: there are hundreds of

clubs and thousands of children and young people playing, and there are limited resources. So, it comes back to that awful factor of a lack of money and people.

[157] We have said in the submission that, in terms of grass roots and access to participation, there are two issues: the availability of good-quality facilities to be able to present the game properly and the availability of people's time to make these events happen. There are massive numbers of volunteers involved in the amateur game in Wales and across the UK, but they cannot do it all; they need our support, guidance and the facilities in which to play. So, those very target groups that you are interested in and identify tend to suffer in our work. Given that it is a mass-participation sport, we are inevitably drawn to mainstream clubs. When we are working with clubs, we encourage them to have development plans of their own, which could reflect some of those target groups. In the south of Cardiff, we have set up specific projects and programmes that aim to work with black and ethnic minority communities. However, that is not the situation across Wales. So, it is down to those kinds of relationships.

[158] **Val Lloyd:** I do not want to cut into someone else's time, but I would like to pick this up and run with it, to extend the football metaphor, although I am not very good at playing football. I understand that resources are stretched, but this might only need a kick start. For example, the parents in Swansea were so delighted that the event had been started that they were running the whole event, even down to the fact that one of the fathers, who was coaching, had a visual impairment himself and was a qualified coach. They had generated the money for the tournament themselves. So, would it be possible to tap into the enthusiasm that might be there to move these projects forward?

[159] **Mr Gough:** Yes it could, but, as I said, there are limited numbers of people with a limited amount of time to facilitate such events and to encourage them to happen. We have been able to target some programmes here in Cardiff, but that is not necessarily the case elsewhere. It is a problem of the amount of resources that we have and where those are targeted. A small intervention could make a significant difference, but it is quite difficult even to do that. Another factor in terms of these football development officers, who can be funded jointly by the local authority and the FAW Trust, is that, as part of that contract, they are taken out of local-authority-based work for at least 28

days a year as part of that funding contract to work on technical issues and player development with national-level players. So, there is even more pressure on their time from that kind of arrangement.

[160] Another part of putting more resource into grass-roots development and the targeted interventions that you are talking about is to try to move away from that and have a clear understanding that local government is more interested in mass participation, targeted interventions and the development of players and the national game. It really is a governing-body issue and, although the two need to link up and have pathways joining them together, there is some confusion and duplication there, which is adversely impacting on access and participation.

[161] **Rosemary Butler:** That is a useful point, thank you.

[162] **Owen John Thomas:** Diolch, Gadeirydd. Fe siaradaf yn Gymraeg.

Owen John Thomas: Thank you, Chair. I will speak in Welsh.

[163] **Mr Gough:** I do not speak Welsh, I am afraid.

[164] **Rosemary Butler:** Can you just ensure that your headset is switched to the right channel?

[165] **Mr Gough:** We are in business now.

[166] **Owen John Thomas:** Hoffwn godi dau beth. Mae'r cyntaf yn ymwneud ag ysgolion. Ers 1988, pan gyflwynwyd y cwricwlwm cenedlaethol, bu'n llawer llai atyniadol i athrawon fynd â'r plant i'r parc ar ddydd Sadwrn i chwarae yn erbyn ysgolion eraill. Bu lleihad sylweddol ers hynny, a hoffwn wybod beth mae'r awdurdodau lleol yn ei wneud i geisio gwella'r sefyllfa hon, ac i bwysleisio'r pwysigrwydd bod rhywun yn yr ysgol, ac mewn ysgolion cynradd yn arbennig, yn cymryd cyfrifoldeb am bêl-droed a chwaraeon eraill.

Owen John Thomas: I would like to raise two issues. The first is on schools. Since 1988, when the national curriculum was introduced, it has become far less attractive for teachers to take children to the park on a Saturday morning to play against other schools. There has been a significant reduction since then, and I would like to know what local authorities are doing to try to address that situation, and to emphasise the importance that someone in schools, particularly primary schools, is responsible for football and other sports.

[167] Yr ail beth yw ystafelloedd newid a chaeau. Mae llawer o bobl yn dadlau nad oes llawer o newid wedi bod yn eu cyflwr yn ystod y 30 mlynedd diwethaf, ac nid ydynt wedi gwella. Er enghraifft, pan ydych wedi bod yn chwarae ar gae yn y gaeaf, yn y gwynt a'r glaw—yn arbennig os ydych wedi bod yn chwarae ar yr asgell a heb gael llawer o'r bêl—ac yr ydych yn mynd i mewn i'r ystafelloedd newid, mae llwyth o bobl yn mynd ar ôl y dwr twym, ac yr ydych mewn cwt ac yn gorfod aros. Mae hyn yn eithaf diflas o ystyried pa mor bwysig yw pêl-droed o ran cryfhau'r sment cymdeithasol mewn ardaloedd a chymunedau. A ydych yn teimlo bod awdurdodau lleol yn buddsoddi digon o arian i ddenu mwy o bobl i chwarae ac i gymryd rhan?

My second point is on changing rooms and playing fields. Many people would argue that there has been very little change or improvement in their condition over the past 30 years. For example, when you have been playing on a pitch in the winter, in the rain and the wind—particularly if you have been playing on the wing and have not seen much of the ball—and you go into the changing rooms, loads of people are going after the hot water, and you are in a hut and you have to wait your turn. This is not a particularly pleasant experience, bearing in mind the importance of football in strengthening the social cement in areas and communities. Do you feel that local authorities are investing enough to attract more people to play and to participate?

[168] **Mr Gough:** First, I will deal with the question on schools and the national curriculum. Local authorities have already responded to the issue of the change in the involvement of school teachers in after-school sport and so on, largely in partnership with the Sports Council for Wales. The general growth in the number of sports development officers—generic sports development officers and sport-specific sports development officers—has been a significant response to that over a period of time. More recently, the Sports Council for Wales has introduced specialist funding programmes to encourage after-school sports clubs, and, through the Dragon Sport programme, there is work on making linkages between school sport and club-based sport. The Dragon Sport programme began at secondary-school level and is now being rolled out at primary-school level, for the sorts of reasons that I think you were hinting at, namely the need to catch children young and get them involved in sport.

11.20 a.m.

[169] The other part of this is the lottery-funded physical education and school sport programme, which has made capital funding available, as well as some revenue funding, to improve school-based facilities and then put in games and sports organisers to assist the PE teachers to establish those after-school activities. So, we have recognised the issues and have tried to address them. We would like to do more if resources were available. I do not know whether you want to ask any follow-up questions on that part of the question first.

[170] **Owen John Thomas:** I just wanted you to comment on the point about changing rooms.

[171] **Mr Gough:** Do you want me to go straight on to that?

[172] **Owen John Thomas:** Yes.

[173] **Rosemary Butler:** Okay, and then other people can come in on the same point.

[174] **Mr Gough:** It is not just football facilities that are suffering from a lack of investment in local government; we have an ageing stock of leisure and recreational facilities, and buildings of all sorts. So, the soccer facilities are caught up in that difficulty for local government. It is becoming increasingly difficult to fund major levels of investment in facilities that have been deteriorating over 20 or 30 years. In a sense, criticism could be levelled at local government for allowing that deterioration to take place, but it is a fact of life and we are trying to address those kinds of issues. It is made even more difficult in Wales than perhaps in other parts of the United Kingdom due to the amount of other funding that is available to us, particularly lottery funding, to help address some of these issues. It is more difficult for football, but at the moment, the kind of strategies that we are looking at to overcome these challenges in terms of the major leisure buildings, leisure centres, swimming pools and so on, increasingly involve trying to find partners that provide complementary services, be they health based or community based, to share the burden and to look to new development and regeneration to lever some of that funding from developers and section 106 agreements and so on.

[175] Coming back to football pitches very quickly, the other factor, which you alluded to in one sense, is that people have higher expectations of quality standards, and that becomes

challenging. In addition, UEFA and the FAW are also raising their standards of pitch provision and it is becoming increasingly difficult for us to respond to that.

[176] **Rosemary Butler:** Kirsty, do you want to come in on that?

[177] **Kirsty Williams:** Yes, thank you, Rosemary. I spoke to Paul Griffiths, the head of recreation, culture and countryside services at Powys County Council, yesterday about the challenges facing people like you in local government. Can you explain the effect that increasingly tight local government settlements has on your ability to deliver in this field because of the non-statutory element of what you are being asked to deliver? Where local government has statutory elements that it is required by law to deliver, and you are working in a department where your job does not have the same statutory nature, what effect does that have? Would there be any merit—I do not know whether there would; I am just chucking it out there—in looking at having a statutory responsibility placed on local government to deliver in this area?

[178] **Rosemary Butler:** Laura, do you want to come in on the same point, although that was not quite on the same point?

[179] **Kirsty Williams:** It is all to do with funding; nothing can be done because there is no money.

[180] **Laura Anne Jones:** It is linked in; Kirsty is quite right. The sports side of local government is always an extra. It is a sideline and is not deemed interesting or important enough. However, in the Assembly, a number of warm words are spoken by the Government about it being important and having a knock-on effect on health, crime and anti-social behaviour—all of the things that we are trying to tackle. So, it is an important section and Kirsty is right to raise that question. It is something that we should look into.

[181] Going back to the state of the pitches, which was the issue that I was going to ask about, it is hard for you because there is no money, but there is a requirement to have separate changing rooms for men and women, and disabled facilities, because, as you said, the number of women taking up football has increased by 300 per cent. That is an added extra and is something that you have to deal with. Can you comment on that?

[182] **Dr Llewellyn:** Can I comment on the settlement and the

local government finance issues? You are right that there are increasing pressures on local government, as expectations in relation to service delivery increase. At the same time, there is a recognition that settlements are getting tighter, and are likely to be tighter in the future. However, hand in hand with that goes the scrutiny that takes place of local government expenditure. Over the past 12 months, there has been considerable debate about how schools are funded, how much money local authorities spend on schools, and the focus on the individual schools budget figure. Within the local government settlement, assumptions are made about how much local government spends on education, social services, housing, transport, and the range of statutory services that it provides. The more attention that is given to those assumptions, and the tighter that local authorities are held to spending to those assumptions, the more difficult it becomes to fund the non-statutory discretionary services. Therefore, in a sense, there is pressure from two angles.

[183] On discretionary services, there is an interesting debate to be had about whether elements of culture and leisure should be statutory or not. Funding is a central part of that debate, because, if they were to be made statutory services, we would have to make assumptions on how much additional funding would be available to fund those services. Therefore, it is a big debate, and one that, as an association, we would be prepared to engage in, but there are significant financial implications to it.

[184] In the interim, as Trevor indicated, the challenge for authorities is to be more imaginative and creative, and to try to link and widen the leisure and culture agenda to other strategies, to see how they can work in partnership with other services in local government, as well as beyond that. It is a part of addressing the 'Making the Connection' agenda, and the Beecham agenda, and making more effective and better use of public funding to improve services across the board.

[185] **Mr Gough:** To add to that, it was pleasing to hear the support that our kinds of services get here in the Assembly, and we are grateful for that. It might be nice to see that translated into some money. We also have a paradox in these kinds of services in that, although they are not statutory, among our populations, communities, residents, and so on, they are among the most appreciated services, and yet, when push comes to shove, we are very much second division.

[186] There is an interesting notion around what has happened

to library services in Wales since standards were introduced. We have seen improvements in standards, and a greater political focus on library services. As a representative of the chief officers of recreation and leisure in Wales, we have begun a dialogue with your officials about whether an entitlements and standards approach, rather than a legislative approach, to provision might be a way forward for these kinds of services. Interestingly, that is what Barcelona and Catalonia have done, on the back of the 1992 Olympics. They are currently spending €1 billion on new community sports and leisure facilities across Catalonia.

[187] **Rosemary Butler:** Do you want to come in, Denise?

[188] **Denise Idris Jones:** Yes; it has nothing to do with what has been asked.

[189] **Laura Anne Jones:** I also want to come in.

[190] **Rosemary Butler:** You are on the same point, Laura; you can come back—I am not cutting you off.

[191] **Denise Idris Jones:** I am sure that you would agree that great footballers will come forward regardless of social class. However, my son had a friend who was spotted by a scout from a premier league team, who was asked to play with them as a junior, but his parents had to take him three times a week to train with them. They were able to pay for that, but had he come from a deprived background, the situation would be different. I taught one boy who became, and still is, a wonderful footballer—that would not have been the case. So, what happens to young boys from deprived backgrounds?

11.30 a.m.

[192] My other question is about how local authorities work with football clubs, for example, by sharing facilities. In north Wales, I was teaching in the Wrexham area, where we had professional football clubs, so how did the schools work with Wrexham football club? What scope is there for greater partnership, working on sharing facilities or developing regional academies in conjunction with clubs?

[193] **Mr Gough:** In reality, an awful lot of work goes on as regards professional football and the opportunities that it offers to young people from deprived backgrounds. I can tell you a story of a pupil at Fitzalan High School in Cardiff, from a poor Muslim family, who was scouted and signed up by Manchester

United FC at an early age. He was put into a private school in Manchester, a home was bought for his family, and he moved there. He has played at international level for Wales at every age group, though he has not yet made the senior ranks. That is just a contrasting example. In many popular sports where there is a professional structure, not only football, the clubs are not proud about where they get their talent. If the talent is there, they want to get those people signed up and onto their books, and they are prepared to put their hands in their pockets to make it happen.

[194] In terms of sharing facilities, there is a great deal of pressure on local government facilities, particularly for football. One trend that has been seen for a number of years is the growth in under-10 mini football, which means that we have to convert a senior pitch into two junior pitches to accommodate it, but that then restricts the ability of the adult levels to participate. So, there is a tension there. There is scope for further collaboration and joint working, particularly in academies. We have an interesting situation, which is probably not typical across Wales as far as academies are concerned, in that, because Cardiff City Football Club's first allegiance is to the FAW— [*Inaudible.*—]—it is the league of Wales that would normally form those academies. Given that it is being relegated and promoted all the time, as an authority, we hold the licence for the academy in Cardiff, through the FAW Trust. We then work with the most appropriate clubs to provide that joint working, and that sharing of facilities and of resources in an academy context. The other partner to that in Cardiff is Coleg Glan Hafren, which provides the national vocational qualifications-based learning programmes that go along with that.

[195] **Rosemary Butler:** Interesting. Laura, do you need to come back?

[196] **Laura Anne Jones:** Thank you for your comprehensive contribution to our review. It has been really worthwhile. On page 4 of the report that you have given us today, it worries me that you say, talking about the financial instability again, that,

[197] 'Delays in funding from the National Assembly and the Sports Council for Wales have resulted in local government football development officers not having their contracts renewed'.

[198] Clearly, that is a problem that shows that, once again, not enough importance is placed on those people and the work that

they do.

[199] In addition, following on from that financial instability, a lot of community sports programmes are concerned about the continuation of their funding for the future. An event is being held today in Pill, Newport, arranged by the community sports development side of Newport council, to create awareness of which projects are going on and how successful they are, particularly in areas such as Pill, where they are desperately needed. Money is coming in from Communities First, Westminster and another Assembly pot, but there is some worry over some of the funding from one of those sources being pulled. I will not go into it too much now, but they are concerned about the future of the good work that they have been doing. Could you just talk about long-term funding and whether you think that it should be secured rather than this mismatch that is going on now, and having to apply every year?

[200] In addition, do you agree that it might be a good idea to have some sort of financial help for parents, to encourage people from poorer backgrounds to play football, to help with the cost of buying kit and that sort of thing? I do not know whether there is some sort of scheme going on with clubs at the moment, but could you elaborate on that? Also—

[201] **Rosemary Butler:** Last one.

[202] **Laura Anne Jones:** Yes. I have just one question on disability, which Val touched on. It is a subject close to my heart, and I have seen a lot of good work with disabled people, in playing football and integrating them into the community. There has been some really good stuff on that. I know that the state of the pitches is bad, but could you comment on the state of facilities for disabled people?

[203] **Mr Gough:** Okay. First of all, longer term funding would be nice, but our football development officers, for example, are on four-year funded contracts. While that is better than it used to be, and it is getting a bit more medium term rather than short term, it still leads to fairly high levels of staff turnover, insecurity of career prospects, and so on. So, it is a challenge in all sorts of ways, particularly where you are getting funding from lottery-funded projects perhaps or Communities First projects, which are time limited. You always have to have an eye on the exit route to see how you can make that project sustainable at the end of the funding. Sometimes, we are able to do it; other times, we are

not. So, it is patchy.

[204] In terms of financial help to families, it would be laudable, but it would be difficult to say 'yes' for football and 'no' to ice hockey, rugby or any other kind of sport, so it could be very expensive. Once kids get into a team-based or club-based structure, the club takes on the responsibility for most of that. So, if money could be made available, yes, it would be nice, but I would think that are probably other priorities if money were to be made available.

[205] Your final point on disability is another factor in the quality and condition of changing rooms and so on. Certainly, the vast majority of our facilities in Cardiff are not currently compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. The council is putting about £1.5 million a year into that, but that is across its whole property portfolio, which includes other council buildings and so on. Really, we are barely scratching the surface. Where we are able to get money to refurbish a building, we make sure that it is fully DDA compliant, but we have plenty that are not at the moment, and I would say that that position is probably representative across Wales.

[206] **Rosemary Butler:** Thank you for that. Some very interesting issues have been brought up, particularly concerning whether we should have a definite legal standard for culture and sport. Having been in local government a long time, I have found that the council spent more because there was no legal limit. If you were told that you had to spend 2 per cent, it would be 2 per cent and nothing more, whereas it is a matter of winning hearts and minds, as you say. Many members of the public are really keen on sports facilities and they actually bring a bigger pressure to bear than being told to spend 1 per cent or 2 per cent would. However, I certainly think that perhaps we could look at standards and having a general Welsh standard. Libraries have certainly gone from one level to another in the past few years.

[207] I was interested in your point about sports development officers, and the fact that some are paid for by the FAW Trust, some by local authorities, and others are joint funded. Is it possible for us to have those figures, so that we know which authorities are funding their own, and whether there is a standard allocation from the FAW Trust across Wales?

[208] **Dr Llewellyn:** We do not have that information with us, but we can provide it for you.

[209] **Rosemary Butler:** I knew that you would not have it now.

[210] On the other point that you made about football crossing boundaries, we could certainly be looking at using football as one of the vocational areas in the 14-19 framework, in a far better way than we have done up to now.

11.40 a.m.

[211] You have not mentioned artificial turf pitches at all. I know that people like to play on grass, but it is not as manageable as ATP, which can certainly be used for juniors and training. It might be helpful to know how many such pitches there are in Wales—not today, obviously. The thing about football pitches is that, on a Wednesday, you have 50 too many, but, on a Saturday, you are 30 short. It is unfortunate.

[212] The fact that Cardiff City Football Club holds the licence for the academy is interesting, and we need to look at that. However, the issue of funding is quite interesting. It is not so much about how much funding you have, but for how long you know that you have it. We now have the three-year rolling programme, which is much better, but you still have the question of what is going to happen next year, at year two and a half. Communities First and all these other projects are certainly showing that long-term funding is the way forward.

[213] It is about getting volunteers and encouraging people to come forward and to help run the little local leagues—not only referees and coaches, but people with management skills. We need to look at that more, from our point of view. Laura, did you want to come back?

[214] **Laura Anne Jones:** I have a final question. How do you find your relationship with the FAW? Do you find it to be a useful relationship, or do you find that there is a communication breakdown?

[215] **Mr Gough:** Communication could be improved. Our principal relationship in local government is with the trust rather than with the FAW. There is a disconnection there. In my experience, and that of colleagues across Wales, there appears to be a disconnection between the FAW and its own trust, in terms of communication.

[216] **Rosemary Butler:** Does anybody want to raise any other points? I see not. I know that we made comments about the

pitches being bad, and about the changing accommodation not being good, but I think that what local government does for football across Wales is really very good. We have a difficulty in that you have a period of five or six years when all the leisure facilities that were built 20 or 25 years ago suddenly come to the end of their useful life, and it gets quite difficult. The point that we have made is that people expect higher standards now than they did a few years ago, and there is an issue about changing accommodation that is suitable for boys and girls and for people with disabilities. We need to make some recommendations about that. Thank you; that has been helpful. If you would like to stay and listen, you may, or you can move off. I will not mention extra time or early bath or any of those things. [*Laughter.*]

[217] We are very pleased that Ann Jones, who I thought might come in her Rhyl jersey and who is, as we all know, quite passionate about football, has kindly offered to give us the benefit of her thoughts.

[218] **Ann Jones:** I resisted the temptation to put the Rhyl jersey on. I wish to preface my remarks by saying that anything that I say is my own personal view, and is not associated with any member of the Rhyl board or any member of any other Welsh premier league club board, whether directors, management or coaching staff. I say that because I understand that the FAW has a confidentiality clause and clubs may be fined if they say something that is deemed to be detrimental in the eyes of the FAW.

[219] This is to talk about the FAW. For a long time, I have been trying to get to what the FAW actually does for Welsh premier league football in Wales—other than just supporting the national team, which, unfortunately, seems to be slipping down the rankings. We have not qualified for a major event since just before I was born, some 50 plus years ago. That is a disappointment to me and many supporters across Wales.

[220] I have found, from talking to supporters, that there is a distinct and growing concern about what the FAW does and a lack of confidence in its management and structure. I believe that mention has been made somewhere—but it needs to be said again—that the FAW has one shareholder who owns 79 per cent of the company's shares, another shareholder holds 20 per cent of the shares, and one share is taken up by someone else. So, it does not begin to give people any faith when they know that it is being run like that, and I believe that the council of 29 members

works, but it takes its directions from the FAW. So, a lot of supporters up and down the country that I talk to are increasingly worried about that. It was quite telling when Trevor from the WLGA said that Cardiff's first allegiance is to the FA, not the FAW. I quite understand why Cardiff—and congratulations to it on being top of the league at the moment—and Swansea play in the English FA system, as does Wrexham. Then we have the Welsh Premier League. There is a big gulf, no doubt, between the Welsh Premier League and the English FA systems, and a lot of that is down to the pyramid system that the FAW operates. The FAW admits, on its own website, that the pyramid system is confusing, and if any of you have looked at it, you will know that, by god, it is confusing. I am just grateful that Rhyl plays in the top half of the Welsh Premier League and not in some feeder league that is attempting to get into the Welsh Premier League, because I do not know which route it would take—I still have not been able to work that one out.

[221] It is a shame that the FAW is perceived like this by supporters across the country. There is a need to ask the FAW some pertinent questions about whether it is value for money, whether it does the job, and what it is doing to promote football in Wales. If Mr Collins ever deigns to appear before the committee, I would be interested in whether he will put some meat onto the skeleton and answer those questions.

[222] Finally, I took part in the Red Card the FAW protest at the Welsh cup final, which my team was playing in, and both supporters from my team, Rhyl, and from the opposing team, Bangor, took part. Given that there is a history of, shall we say, healthy banter between Rhyl and Bangor, the fact that supporters from both clubs stood and showed the red card before the whistle blew for kick off after the Welsh national anthem was played was testament to the fact that supporters are saying to the FAW, 'Enough is enough—come clean about what you are doing with your money and about what you spend your money on. If you do that, supporters will come back to you and recognise you as the ruling body'. At the moment, I will clearly state on record that I do not think that the FAW can consider itself a fit organisation, in its present format, to run football in Wales.

[223] **Rosemary Butler:** Thank you, Ann. Owen John, you have a question?

[224] **Owen John Thomas:** **Owen John Thomas:** I was

Nid oeddwn yn glir ar y dechrau pan ddywedasoch bod rhywun yn berchen ar 90 y cant o gyfrandaliadau yr FAW, a rhywun arall yn berchen ar 20 y cant.

not clear at the start when you said that someone owned 90 per cent of FAW shares, and someone else owned 20 per cent.

[225] **Ann Jones:** One person owns 79 per cent of the shares; a second person owns 20 per cent; and there is one preferential share that someone else owns.

[226] **Owen John Thomas:** Mae hynny'n ddiddorol. Mae'n rhaid ichi gyfaddef dros y blynyddoedd diwethaf bod FAW wedi llenwi stadiwm y mileniwm sawl gwaith. Yr oedd yn cael y gefnogaeth fwyaf dros Ewrop i gyd—ni lwyddodd yr un wlad arall i gael cymaint o bobl i'w gefnogi ag y gwnaeth yr FAW drwy ddefnyddio'r stadiwm yng Nghaerdydd. Felly, mae pethau da i'w dweud am y sefyllfa bresennol. Pe byddem yn mynd yn ôl tua 10 mlynedd, nid oedd yr FAW yn cael llawer o arian darlledu, er enghraifft, ac yr wyf yn meddwl bod rhywun yma heddiw yn gwyllo'r pwyllgor a fu'n ddylanwadol yn sicrhau ein bod yn cael mwy o'r arian darlledu, a dyna sydd wedi bod yn help mawr i'r FAW.

Owen John Thomas: That is interesting. You must admit that over the last few years the FAW has filled the millennium stadium many times. It got the biggest support across the whole of Europe—no other nation managed to attract as many supporters as the FAW did by using the stadium in Cardiff. So, there are positive things to be said about the present situation. If we were to go back about 10 years, the FAW did not receive much broadcasting income, for example, and I believe that there is someone here today watching our proceedings who was influential in ensuring that we have more of the broadcasting money, and that has been a great help to the FAW.

11.50 a.m.

[227] Hoffwn ein gweld yn symud ymlaen heb fod yn rhy negyddol. Os ydym wir am ddylanwadu ar y FAW, mae'n bwysig ein bod yn mynd ato yn yr hwylliau hynny, nid drwy ddweud ein bod yn meddwl ei fod yn anobeithiol. Nid wyf yn

I would like to see us moving on without being too negative. If we really want to influence the FAW, it is important that we approach it with that attitude, not by saying that we think that it is hopeless. I do not agree with that statement. I think

cytuno â'r datganiad hwnnw. Yr wyf yn meddwl y dylem fod yn edrych tuag at welliant mewn pêl droed yng Nghymru. Mae'n anodd oherwydd mae Lloegr drws nesaf i ni gyda phoblogaeth fawr a chlybiau mawr, cyfoethog, ac mae cystadlu gyda nhw yn anodd. Os ydym yn sôn am Latvia, Lithuania ac Estonia ac yn y blaen, a sut y maent yn llwyddo, y gwir yw nad ydynt yn mynd i chwarae pêl droed yn Rwsia, ond maent yn mynd i lefydd eraill, wrth gwrs. Mae Cymru mewn sefyllfa mewn unigryw ac mae angen cydweithrediad rhwng y bobl sy'n ymddiddori yn hyn, nid polareiddio o blaid neu yn erbyn y FAW. Nid wyf yn credu y byddai hynny yn adeiladol.

that we should we looking for improvements in football in Wales. It is difficult because we have England next door with its large population and large, rich clubs, and competing with them is difficult. If we mention Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia and so on, and how they succeed, the truth is that they do not go off to play football in Russia, but they do go to other places, of course. Wales is in a unique position and what is necessary is co-operation between the interested parties, not polarisation in favour or against the FAW. I do not believe that that would be constructive.

[228] **Rosemary Butler:** I am not going to ask Ann Jones to respond to that because she has come to committee to give her personal views. As a committee, we do not have a stance; we are here to do an overview and it is important that anyone can come and say whatever they choose to, and we have had a number of people from across Wales coming to give various views. Therefore, thank you for that, Owen John, but that is not the position of the committee. We are taking evidence and once we have that evidence, we will take a look and see where there are gaps and whether we can make recommendations across the board to help to improve the state of football, be that for disabled people, girls or whatever. We do not have a position, so Ann is entitled to give her opinion. We will not have a discussion on that. Thank you very much for coming, Ann, that was very interesting. Does anyone else have any points to make on that? I see that they do not.

[229] That brings us to the end of the agenda, but we do have two papers to note. The first is 'Climbing Higher: Progress Report' and the second is the forward work programme, which of course has now been changed because we have agreed to invite

the FAW again on 11 October. We will circulate the letters this afternoon and if you could all agree them, we could then get them sent off today. Thank you all very much; it has been an interesting meeting.

Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 11.53 a.m.
The meeting ended at 11.53 a.m.

Wednesday, 11 October 2006

**Yr Adolygiad o Bêl-droed
Football Review**

[68] **Rosemary Butler:** The reason that we have more of a gap this morning, which allows time to look at the proposals from Huw Jones, is because, after the last meeting, we sent a letter to the Football Association of Wales. There has been no formal response from the FAW council, but the secretary general, David Collins, e-mailed the clerk to say that the FAW would not be attending today. This is what his e-mail said:

'As I explained in my telephone conversation just now, Wales play Cyprus in a full international match, part of the EURO 2008 qualifying group, on Wednesday, 11 October. We will not be able to meet with your committee on this day as we are committed to this major match and its preparation. I am extremely surprised that you were not aware of this clash of dates.

I will agenda your letter for the next Council meeting in 18 October.'

[69] So, he is putting our letter, which invited him to come on 11 October, to the meeting on 18 October. So, hopefully, when they meet on 18 October, they will decide that they would be pleased to come to discuss things with us. If that is the case, we are going to have to ask the Business Committee to arrange an extra meeting. That will be quite difficult, because all of you are members of other committees, so there may be clashes. We will have to look at that, but that is the situation at the moment.

[70] Since then, the clerk has received another e-mail from Mr Collins; he sent a copy of an article that was included in a recent match handbook and has agreed that that may be taken as evidence from the Football Association of Wales. We will not know until after the FAW's meeting on 18 October whether they will be coming to committee to give evidence. We will possibly have to look at an additional meeting.

[71] Given that we do not have the FAW with us this morning, Huw Jones now has a little more time to go through what he is suggesting. Are there any comments on what I have just said?

[72] **Eleanor Burnham:** It is regrettable that the FAW cannot come, whether it is a special day or not, and I am sure that you, as Chair, are doing your utmost. My only other comment is: if we have this gap, why can we not have the budget discussion?

[73] **Rosemary Butler:** That is not part of the formal committee agenda; it is just background information for Members.

[74] **Eleanor Burnham:** But we could close the formal committee and go into informal discussion about the budget, and then we could all be here.

[75] **Rosemary Butler:** I am sorry that you are not happy with my arrangement, Eleanor, but—

[76] **Eleanor Burnham:** I did not say that I was not happy. I have constituents coming and it is quite tricky, as you can imagine.

[77] **Rosemary Butler:** I accept that, Eleanor, but this has been known to your office, at least it should have been known, for some time. If you cannot come, that is fine; there is no need to make a big issue out of it.

[78] **Eleanor Burnham:** I am just asking—

[79] **Rosemary Butler:** I cannot rearrange the agenda to add an informal item, because we have officials coming at 12.15 p.m.. If we finish early, then we can start it early. If the officials are not available, then we cannot, but we can make inquiries to see whether they are available in case we finish the meeting early.

[80] **Eleanor Burnham:** Good. Thank you, Chair.

[81] **Rosemary Butler:** I see that no-one else has any comments.

[82] We will now move on to the football review. We are pleased that Huw Jones, the chief executive of the Sports Council for Wales, is with us, as is Manon Roberts. We welcome you both. We have received an interesting paper from Huw, and if you will introduce it, Huw, we will then have an open discussion. We have until 10.30 a.m., which is good. In case I forget to say so later on, we have a discussion on technical advice note 16 following the break, and you are more than welcome to stay for that. Right, over to you, Huw.

[83] **Mr Jones:** Thank you, Chair. First of all, I introduce my colleague, Manon Rhys Roberts. Manon is a senior national governing body development officer, and she has liaison responsibility for football. So, she probably knows far more about football than I do. She will focus on some of the development issues that we will be talking about.

[84] We have tried to set out in the paper some of the main issues that we believe the committee might want to consider in producing its report. So, hopefully, that will be of some benefit in trying to bring some sort of focus to your deliberations when you come to consider the report. We have set the paper out in a number of sections and what I would suggest, Chair, with your approval, is that we focus on five specific sections. I suggest that

we focus on the structure of football and governance issues first, then football development, refereeing and officiating, the equality issues of women's and girls' football and community football, which we will take together, and, finally, funding and resources. If we take them en bloc like that, it might help you in terms of the focus of your discussion.

[85] I will start by focusing on the governance and structural issues, then I will take questions from Members, and then we will pass on to Manon, who will talk about the football development issues, if that is all right. We have made a few points in the paper regarding the effectiveness of the current structure of football, but there are three fundamental issues for me. When we are talking about the development of governing bodies, and this is true whatever size a governing body is, we want to see three broad things put in place. The first is good governance and effective leadership of the governing body, which is crucial, including good financial control management. The second issue is that the governing body should have a sound domestic structure. The third issue is that it needs to have a sound international, competitive structure.

9.20 a.m.

[86] By that we mean that if you do not compete at the right levels, you cannot develop players at any particular level. A classic example of that, to give you two examples from two other sports, is netball. It struggles each year internationally because it does not have a strong international competitive structure. One week, the girls could be playing in the central Cardiff league; the next week, they could be playing against Australia. The gap is far too big to bridge. So there needs to be a sound domestic structure and a sound international one. To be fair to bodies such as the Welsh Rugby Union, it has tried to put in place the model that I have just articulated. It has tried to reform its governance and domestic structures and it is certainly performing far better internationally. It deserves credit for that. However, it is not there yet and I think that it appreciates that. Football needs to look at that type of model to ensure that it has sound structures.

[87] On the points in the paper, there needs to be a review of the governance structures of football, particularly the FAW and its relationship with the FAW Trust. That is fundamental. The structure of the FAW is quite fundamental to how it moves itself forward and how it makes decisions. It seriously needs to look at the development of a skills-based board. We are developing that across all our governing bodies as part of the modernisation of sport. Rather than having representatives from localities, we are looking at very much a skills-based board, because we are

looking at development and at bodies needing to be much more commercial and developmental in their approaches.

[88] It is also a matter of having a strategy in place. As far as we are aware, there is no strategy covering the development of football in the long term. That needs to be followed by the development of forward plans and annual operational plans. We expect that from all our governing bodies, even some of the smaller ones to some degree. Clearly, the amount of detail that we would expect from a smaller body would be much less. However, for a body with a significant turnover and resources, such as a footballing body, we would expect to see those things in place, if that body is to be successful in the long term.

[89] **Rosemary Butler:** Do you want to move on and do the rest, and then we will come back?

[90] **Mr Jones:** That is up to you, Chair, but it might be interesting for Members to focus on particular issues rather than go all over the place.

[91] **Rosemary Butler:** We are comfortable with that. Who wants to comment?

[92] **Eleanor Burnham:** I was sorry that I was not here the last time, but the FAW's response as to why it could not come to the committee seems rather interesting. I do not want to put you on the spot and if you cannot comment on this, I will understand, but if you can—

[93] **Rosemary Butler:** I do not think that it is appropriate for Huw to comment on that. Can we just talk about the development of a governing body?

[94] **Eleanor Burnham:** Yes. I felt that perhaps that was part of the difficulty—

[95] **Rosemary Butler:** But that is for us to discuss at a later date.

[96] **Eleanor Burnham:** Okay. So, what would be your first move in respect of governance and is it up to the sports council or does the FAW feel that it has a unique way of doing things? Does the FAW believe itself to be successful, because I believe that a small country such as Uruguay, which has a similar population to Wales, has won the World Cup around seven times?

[97] **Mr Jones:** It has qualified.

[98] **Eleanor Burnham:** Exactly. So, if it can qualify, what can we do—if we can do anything to help, which is obviously why we are undertaking this review—to try to get the governance, structures and development right because it is quite an embarrassment that a country like ours, which has talent, cannot develop further?

[99] **Rosemary Butler:** I accept your general point, but you cannot ask Huw to say why he thinks the FAW thinks it is better or whatever. I know that it is difficult for us, but it is not fair on Huw to ask for his impression of other people's impressions.

[100] **Eleanor Burnham:** Okay. I am not an expert on football, but I do know a little bit. It seems sad that Wales cannot achieve something similar to a small country like Uruguay. Can you comment on that?

[101] **Mr Jones:** I agree with that. If we are to achieve qualification in European championships or World Cup qualifiers, as I think that everyone in Wales wants us to, then there has to be significant reform. That is the only way that that can happen. If you keep on doing what you have always done, you will get what you have always got. The difficulty at the moment is the reluctance of some organisations, particularly some football organisations, to change.

[102] **Eleanor Burnham:** I have a brief follow-up question, if I may. As an outsider looking in, and as a woman—I might as well be sexist, because I think that some of the broadcasters were trying to be sexist earlier in our review—can you tell me why we need to have all of these organisations? It seems to me that there is confusion over who does what. Is it not possible that we could encourage all of these organisations to be streamlined?

[103] **Mr Jones:** The crucial issue is that the controlling body for football is the Football Association of Wales. That is the governing body, and it is recognised by us and by the Union of European Football Associations and FIFA as such. As the governing body, we expect it to show leadership in these matters in terms of the development of strategies, and in looking at the differing roles of bodies to ensure that there is no duplication, that there is some streamlining, and that we are getting the best out of the system that we have.

[104] **Val Lloyd:** Thank you, Huw, for that clear exposition. There appears to be a sound scheme in mind of how to get there. In your view, all things being equal, how long will it take to develop the governance structures that you have outlined? What steps will be needed to get from here to there?

[105] **Mr Jones:** Many of these things come down to attitude. If people do not want to change, then they will not change. That is the challenge, particularly for a body such as the FAW. We have had meetings with it in the past, as has the Minister, to emphasise the importance of these matters. We have a meeting with the FAW in a fortnight's time to continue to address this particular issue and let us hope that, through diplomacy, we can convince them of the need to change and embrace some of these

issues, because I do not think that there is a threat there for it; it has everything to gain as a result of this and nothing to lose, although certain individuals who sit on certain committees and bodies may have something to lose.

[106] **Val Lloyd:** Can I just press you a little more on the timescale? I know that it is a guesstimate, but I would value your learned opinion on that.

[107] **Mr Jones:** We are now getting to a timescale, particularly with the committee's deliberations. I do not wish to jump too far ahead, but, in light of discussions that we have had with the Assembly Government, my council's view on this matter is that we are very concerned about the situation that we are faced with in terms of the development of football. We certainly welcome the committee's views on issues such as timescale. We would want to take some fundamental decisions no later than January regarding the future funding of football.

[108] **Lisa Francis:** I agree with what you said and, in terms of a national structure, it is clear from the evidence that we have taken that the game at a national level will not improve without that. It is difficult with the FAW, because it does not seem to have a clear strategy or anything that we can see happening. You have said that it needs to be reviewed, particularly with regard to how it relates to other organisations. There is, at times, a communication breakdown. So, there is a lot of work to be done to persuade and encourage it to change; I accept that. However, you said that the next step after that would be the need to look at developing a skills-based board—I believe that those were the words that you used. Could you elaborate a bit on how you would envisage that happening?

9.30 a.m.

[109] **Mr Jones:** At present, the FAW's board is made up of, I believe, 27 individuals. It is difficult for 27 individuals, plus officials, to sit around and make decisions on matters. The individuals on the FAW represent specific parts of Wales; they do not necessarily have financial control, management, leadership, commercial, and marketing skills—all the issues that you would expect a commercial body and a company limited by guarantee to have in place.

[110] **Rosemary Butler:** Is there anything else, Lisa?

[111] **Lisa Francis:** No, not really. The work is cut out in making inroads into the FAW, to persuade it of this huge need to change. As you say, I do not believe that it has anything to fear—in fact, it has everything to gain from this.

[112] **Laura Anne Jones:** There is clearly a gap in the grass-roots provision—you have highlighted it, we have highlighted it,

and everyone we speak to throughout Wales has highlighted it; things need to change. Can you describe what your relationship with the FAW is? How close are you, and how much weight do you carry? It is all very well to float these warm words around—it is a nice idea if we do this to it—but will it listen to what you have to say, because it does not have to, does it? Could you delve into that relationship, and how that could be developed in the future?

[113] **Mr Jones:** That is a fundamental issue. You are right that, just looking at it in simple terms, our relationship with the FAW is not particularly strong. It is not strong partly because of attitude and approach, but also because of the structure of football that we face. One strength of establishing the FAW Trust, about 10 or 12 years ago, was that money was ring-fenced for developing football, independently of what was happening to the money coming into the FAW's coffers. For many years, when it suffered low attendances and poor commercial development, the first thing that it did was to cut the funding to grass-roots football. Therefore, it decided at that time, to its credit, that it would establish the FAW Trust and put a fixed amount of funding in there; we then put public money into that body. That had the advantage of ring-fencing football to enable it to develop. The disadvantage of that was that the FAW Trust then became more and more independent of the FAW, and therefore we had less leverage on the FAW itself and what it did, in terms of its structure and its strategy, because all the money was going into the trust. That is why you will often read in the newspapers that the FAW says that it does not receive any public money. That is technically true, because all the money goes into the FAW Trust, but it is rather disingenuous because, if that money did not go into the FAW Trust, there would be no football development in Wales.

[114] **Laura Anne Jones:** That is what I wanted to say. Without the FAW, we cannot develop football in Wales, or it will be difficult; all the initiatives coming from the Government, or from us, or from wherever, will not be able to be carried out without it. There seem to be too many chiefs and not enough Indians—there are not enough people on the ground doing the work. However, as you said, there are 27 people on the board, from different backgrounds—they may be from different parts of Wales, but some of them are not business-orientated, which you would expect them to be, or they do not have law backgrounds, or whatever. They may not even be from different levels of football in Wales—from grass-roots representatives, right through. That make-up of the board is worrying; it reflects its attitude to what

we are seeing in terms of results and what is happening on the ground, in all respects. Could you comment on the make-up of the board? Is there any way that that would ever change?

[115] **Rosemary Butler:** I am not sure that that is for Huw to deal with. I am conscious that he is representing the sports council, and we must be careful about what we ask. We can discuss that at another point.

[116] **Laura Anne Jones:** Okay, but we do not need even to look as far as Uruguay for comparison with us; we need only look over the border to England, where they are doing so much right. Why can we not just say, 'Okay, looking at what they're doing, maybe we want to adapt it or improve it and make it better for Wales'—why can we not do that? Why can we not take what they have done that is good and build on it, rather than have this inbuilt attitude in Wales to do something completely different for its own sake? I just cannot get my head around it—why do they not do that? That is surely the easier option, and it will save us money in the long term in researching the best way forward.

[117] **Mr Jones:** What we are looking for bodies to do is to very much take the lead from, as I said, bodies such as the WRU, which looked over the precipice a couple of years ago and saw the situation regarding the development of rugby in Wales and, therefore, the financing of rugby and the financing of such things as the Millennium Stadium. To its credit, it has reformed. You may look at some of its decisions and disagree with them, but its structures are now much sounder, it has a much more skills-based board in place in terms of decision making, and its financial situation is improving significantly as a result, as is the domestic and international structure. I am convinced that that model will work with football if they are prepared to embrace it.

[118] **Owen John Thomas:** Rhaid dechrau gan dderbyn bod gan Gymru broblemau demograffeg sylweddol, gyda phoblogaeth o 3 miliwn, a'r wlad drws nesaf â 50 miliwn o bobl a strwythur pêl-droed cryf iawn. Ar y llaw arall, yn hanesyddol, er bod llai o bobl yn chwarae rygbi, yr ydym wastad wedi cael nifer o glybiau rygbi cryf iawn sy'n gallu cystadlu â chlybiau Lloegr. Mae rhywbeth i'w ddysgu o hynny, ond nid wyf yn siwr beth. Ni wn pam mae

Owen John Thomas: We must start by accepting that Wales has significant demographic problems, with a population of 3 million, bordering a country with a population of 50 million and a very strong football structure. On the other hand, historically, despite the fact that fewer people play rugby, we have always had a number of very strong rugby clubs that are able to compete against English clubs. There is something to be learnt in that, but I am not sure

rygbi'n gryfach, er bod llai yn ei chwarae. Gwn ei bod yn anodd ichi edrych ar yr FAW a nodi unrhyw beth sy'n bod arno, ond pe baech yn edrych ar ryw wlad ddychmygol a chanddi 3 miliwn o bobl, sydd drws nesaf i wlad â'r un boblogaeth â Lloegr, sut y byddech yn mynd ati i symud y gêm yn ei blaen fel y byddai'n cyrraedd yr un lefel â rygbi?

[119] **Mr Jones:** Cytunaf ein bod dan anfantais o edrych ar boblogaeth ein gwlad o'i chymharu â phoblogaethau gwledydd megis Lloegr, yr Eidal, yr Almaen a Sbaen—mae gennym lawer yn llai. O'r herwydd, ni fyddwn mor llwyddiannus. Er hynny, yn y pen draw, llwyddiant i ni fyddai cymryd rhan yn rowndiau terfynol Cwpan y Byd neu Gwpan Ewrop. Dylem allu cyrraedd cystadlaethau fel hynny bob hyn a hyn. Nid ydym wedi cyrraedd y rowndiau hynny ers fy mod yn faban, ac nid yw hynny'n digon da inni fel gwlad. Nid hynny y mae pobl Cymru am ei weld.

[120] O ran edrych ar ein chwaraewyr, yr ydym wedi datblygu rhai chwaraewyr rhagorol dros y blynyddoedd. Yn ogystal â Ryan Giggs, yr ydym wedi datblygu Neville Southall a Kevin Ratcliffe, ac mae unigolion ifanc megis Gareth Bale a Lewin Nyatanga yn dod ymlaen yn awr. Mae'r rhain yn chwaraewyr rhagorol, a dylem fod yn gallu

what. I do not know why rugby is stronger, despite fewer people playing the game. I know that it is difficult for you to look at the FAW and say what is wrong with it, but if you were to consider some imagined land with a population of 3 million, and whose neighbour is a country with the same size population as England's, how would you go about developing the game so that it would reach the same level as rugby?

Mr Jones: I agree that we are at a disadvantage considering the population of our country compared with that of countries such as England, Italy, Germany and Spain—we have fewer people by far. Because of that, we will not be as successful. However, ultimately, success for us would mean participating in the final rounds of the World Cup or the European Cup. We should be able to reach such competitions every now and then. We have not reached those rounds since I was a baby, and that is not good enough for us as a country. That is not what the people of Wales want to see.

Looking at our players, we have developed some excellent players over the years. In addition to Ryan Giggs, we have developed Neville Southall and Kevin Ratcliffe, and there are young individuals such as Gareth Bale and Lewin Nyatanga coming forward now. These are excellent players, and we should be able to give them the

rhoi'r cyfle iddynt gystadlu ar y lefel uchaf drwy sicrhau bod y strwythur yr ydym yn ei roi yn ei le yn dda, a drwy sicrhau ein bod yn gallu taro'r targedau hyn.

[121] **Owen John Thomas:** Yr ydych yn sôn am chwaraewyr sy'n chwarae yn Lloegr. Nid yw'r strwythur yng Nghymru yn ddigon cryf i gadw chwaraewyr felly. Yn y wlad ddychmygol honno, sut y byddech yn newid pethau er mwyn cael strwythur mewanol cryfach? Mae gennym bedwar tîm rygbi rhanbarthol a thimau ar lefel is sydd oll yn gryfach na thimau pêl-droed Cymru, fel tîm Caernarfon— [Chwerthin.] Yr oeddwn yn mynd i ddweud 'tîm y Bari' ond nid yw'n chwarae bellach. [Chwerthin.] Ni wn pam mae pobl yn chwerthin am Gaernarfon; mae'n lle braf.

9.40 a.m.

[122] Sut y byddech yn newid y sefyllfa yn y wlad ddychmygol sydd yn debyg i Gymru er mwyn i'r strwythur mewanol ddod yn gryfach ac er mwyn gallu cadw mwy o chwaraewyr? Mae'n anodd i Gymru gael chwaraewyr gan fod clybiau yn Lloegr yn dweud nad ydynt yn cael dod. Mae hynny'n ein rhoi ni mewn sefyllfa eilradd. Nid bai'r FAW yw hynny ond mae'n rhaid inni gryfhau'r strwythur mewanol.

[123] **Mr Jones:** Byddwn wastad yn wynebu sefyllfa lle mae'r chwaraewyr ifanc gorau yn mynd i chwarae i Loegr, yr Eidal, yr Almaen neu le bynnag,

opportunity to compete at the highest level by ensuring that the structure that we put in place is a good one, and by ensuring that we can meet those targets.

Owen John Thomas: You are talking about players who play in England. The structure in Wales is not robust enough to keep such players. In that imagined land, how would you change things so that that internal structure would become stronger? We have four regional rugby teams and teams that play at a lower level that are all stronger than the Welsh football teams, such as Caernarfon— [Laughter.] I was going to say 'the Barry team', but it is not playing any more. [Laughter.] I do not know why people are laughing about Caernarfon; it is a fine place.

How would you go about changing the situation in this imaginary land that is similar to Wales so that the internal structure became stronger and more of the players could be kept? It is difficult for Wales to get players as clubs in England say that they cannot come. That puts us in a second-rate position. That is not the fault of the FAW, but we must strengthen the internal structure.

Mr Jones: We are always going to have the situation where the best young players go to play in England, Italy, Germany or wherever, because that is where

gan mai dyna lle mae'r arian mwyaf a'r cryfder. Mae pobl wastad yn mynd i gael eu tynnu tuag at yr arian hwnnw. Mae hynny'n digwydd mewn lleoedd fel Bwlgaria a Rwmania, ond gallant hwy ddatblygu chwaraewyr ifanc, a phan fo'r chwaraewyr hynny yn dod i ryw safon, mae tueddiad iddynt fynd dramor neu i wledydd eraill yn Ewrop i'w datblygu eu hunain. Ni chredaf fod problem gyda hynny. Nid oes problem gyda rhywun fel Gareth Thomas yn mynd i Toulouse i ddatblygu ei sgiliau. Yr un yw'r sefyllfa gyda Stephen Jones. Maent yn chwaraewyr llawer gwell yn fy marn i oherwydd eu bod wedi gadael Cymru am dipyn ac wedi datblygu sgiliau yn rhywle arall. Y sialens inni yw creu strategaeth a strwythur lle mae cysylltiad cryfach rhwng y gwahanol glybiau a rhyw fath o system pyramid lle gall y chwaraewyr gorau ddatblygu a symud i fyny i chwarae ar y safonau uchaf i wella'u sgiliau a'u safonau.

[124] **Owen John Thomas:** A allwch ehangu ar y system pyramid? Deallaf y peth yn syml, ond sut y byddech yn gweld hynny'n datblygu mewn gwlad fel Cymru?

[125] **Mr Jones:** Ar hyn o bryd, mae'r clybiau i gyd yn hollol annibynnol o'i gilydd ac nid oes system fwydo i glybiau gwell. Yn hytrach na chael clybiau'n bwydo clybiau uwch a gwell, y tueddiad yw ceisio cadw pobl i

the most money and the strength is. People are always going to be attracted to that money. That happens in countries such as Bulgaria and Romania, but they can develop young players and when those players reach a particular standard, they tend to go abroad or to other countries in Europe to develop themselves. I do not think that that is a problem. There is no problem with someone like Gareth Thomas going to play for Toulouse and developing his skills. The same is true of Stephen Jones. They are far better players in my opinion, because they have left Wales for a period of time and have developed skills somewhere else. The challenge for us is to create a strategy and a structure where there is a stronger relationship between the various clubs and some kind of pyramid system where the best players can develop and move up to play at the highest standards to improve their skills and standards.

Owen John Thomas: Can you expand on this pyramid system? I understand it in basic terms, but how would you envisage that developing in a country such as Wales?

Mr Jones: At present, all the clubs are totally independent from each another and there is no feeder system for better clubs. Rather than clubs feeding into higher and better clubs, they tend to try to retain people

- sicrhau bod y clwb—yn hytrach na'r unigolyn—yn datblygu.
- [126] **Owen John Thomas:** Mae'r clybiau fel cadwyn o dywod, felly?
- [127] **Mr Jones:** Ydyn.
- [128] **Owen John Thomas:** Nid oes dim oddi tanynt.
- [129] **Mr Jones:** Yn lle dweud, 'Mae'r bachgen hwn yn chwaraewr rhagorol a dylai fod yn chwarae ar safon lawer uwch na'n clwb ni' a sicrhau ei fod yn chwarae i glwb arall, y tueddiad yw cadw chwaraewr yn ôl er mwyn i'r clwb ddatblygu.
- [130] **Denise Idris Jones:** Do you believe then, Huw, that the review of football that this committee is currently undertaking is a step forward and will eventually break down the barriers that exist, and which have existed for some time, in football in Wales? Do you think that we have brought it to the boil and that this will change things?
- [131] **Mr Jones:** Yes. I certainly welcome the committee's review. When anybody undertakes a review of a public body or a sport or whatever, people can look at it in two ways: they can either look at it as an opportunity or they can look at it as a threat. When the previous Minister set up the football review, we saw that as a major opportunity and it resulted in major funding being made available for football. That is the opportunity that this committee has created and that is why I have encouraged all parties in football to contribute to this review, because it is important.
- [132] **Denise Idris Jones:** Will it have the same effect with the FAW? Obviously it is more aware now.
- [133] **Mr Jones:** I think that that is a matter for you to consider.
- [134] **Rosemary Butler:** Minister, do you want to wind up at the very end or do you want to make a comment now?
- [135] **Alun Pugh:** I will wind up at the end.
- [136] **Eleanor Burnham:** May I have one last question?
- [137] **Rosemary Butler:** You may have just one, because I want to ask a question, and I then want to move on.
- [138] **Eleanor Burnham:** You may not be able to answer this question, but the allegation has been made by the FAW that it cannot be politicised.
- to ensure that the club—rather than the individual—develops.
- Owen John Thomas:** The clubs are building on sand, then?
- Mr Jones:** Yes.
- Owen John Thomas:** There is nothing underneath them.
- Mr Jones:** Instead of saying, 'This boy is an excellent player and he should play at a standard much higher than that of our club' and ensuring that he plays for another club, the tendency is to keep players back so that the club develops.

[139] **Rosemary Butler:** I do not think that he can answer that, sorry.

[140] You talked about this exemplar of how a governing body should be developed. The sports council has obviously been working towards that for a number of years. Can you tell us what percentage of governing bodies in Wales has taken on this format?

[141] **Mr Jones:** We have focused on what we would consider to be the top 20 governing bodies, namely those that would contribute the most, either in terms of increased participation or standards of performance, such as the Commonwealth Games bodies or whatever. So, that is where our focus has been, rather than on the other 35 much smaller bodies. All of them are in various states of development. Some are at a very advanced state of development, such as the tennis body, for example. It has spent a lot of time in the last two years reforming its particular structure, and it now has the type of structure within the governing body that I have been talking about. We are at that stage of development with athletics and swimming bodies in terms of what we want to see them doing. Hockey has been through that process, and we are doing something similar in terms of amalgamating the men's and women's golf unions to form one golf union, and to develop a skills base board, and so on, with them. So, the process that I have articulated is being very much driven through all of the main sports in Wales.

[142] **Rosemary Butler:** I know that squash went through quite a strategic development. What about the badminton body?

[143] **Ms Roberts:** It has undertaken the modernisation process. I am not sure how far down the line it is, but it has attended some workshops and it is working towards the modernisation framework.

[144] **Rosemary Butler:** We are obviously going to talk about the development of football—and if you do not have the figures now it would be quite useful to have them in the future—but what percentage of its income would you expect a governing body to spend on developing its sport? How much does the Welsh Rugby Union, for example, spend on development, percentage-wise?

[145] **Mr Jones:** It is very difficult to put a percentage on it. Generally speaking, we would expect most governing bodies to be self-financing in terms of what we would call their core costs. For example, if the future Assembly Government said that it did not want to fund sport at all and that it wanted to put all its money into the arts, we would want to make sure that all of the governing bodies were financially viable so that they would

continue and would not go bust at the end of the day. So, they need to be in the financial situation to raise their membership costs, which cover things such as their main domestic competition, basic coaching and coach education, so that they will survive as bodies. Public money, namely Assembly Government and sports council funding, goes into the development of those sports, so it will either go into the development of performance and excellence, which would be the case with a sport such as the triathlon, to develop the sport at the very highest level, or into things such as the FAW Trust, where most of the focus of the funding is in the development of the grass-roots level.

[146] **Rosemary Butler:** You talk about public funding going in, but how much would a big commercial organisation such as the WRU spend on development in addition to the public funding?

[147] **Mr Jones:** Off the top of my head, I am not sure, but it is a significant amount of funding because it would fund all of the rugby development officers. It has a regionalised structure of rugby development officers in place, so my guess is that it would be at least £1.5 million to £2 million.

[148] **Rosemary Butler:** Who pays for the football development officers?

[149] **Mr Jones:** All of that would be publicly funded. It would be a partnership between us, the FAW Trust and local authorities. So, it is all public funding.

[150] **Rosemary Butler:** Okay. Are there any other questions on governance, because I want to move on?

9.50 a.m.

[151] **Laura Anne Jones:** Excuse my ignorance, Huw, but if the FAW Trust releases the public money for strategies, who puts the strategies in place? Is it just the FAW Trust on its own that then funds it through public money? What role does the FAW have in forming strategies, and who has the last word?

[152] **Mr Jones:** As the governing body, the FAW would have the ultimate say and sanction. It has devolved responsibility for the development of under-16 football through the FAW Trust, therefore the public funding goes into that part.

[153] **Laura Anne Jones:** So, it is saying, 'Do this', but separating itself completely from the public money that it is releasing for the strategies that the FAW is putting in place.

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

[155] **Laura Anne Jones:** Crikey Moses; that is clever.

[156] **Rosemary Butler:** Are there any other points on the governance?

[157] **Owen John Thomas:** Yn **Owen John Thomas:**
gyffredinol ar bethau megis pêl- Generally, on things such as
droed ar gyfer yr anabl, a yw'n football for the disabled, is it
bosibl— possible—

[158] **Rosemary Butler:** No; this is just on governance. Huw is going to move on now to the remainder of his report.

[159] **Owen John Thomas:** **Owen John Thomas:** All right.
lawn.

[160] **Mr Jones:** If we could take football development now, I will pass over to Manon.

[161] **Ms Roberts:** I will just run through this and if you want to ask questions at the end, that would be great.

[162] I am sure that you would agree that football is one of the most high-profile sports in Wales. It attracts huge media attention and has an avid following among the rest of us in Wales. There has been real progress in the development of football, which we can see clearly from the participation data that I am sure that the FAW Trust put before you when it came to give evidence. The number of boys who are registered for participation is now well over 39,000; for girls, it is well over 2,700; and for senior women it is creeping towards the 1,000 mark. So, in order to get to this position, there have been great development programmes in place. Much of this has come from the FAW Trust. Some of its initiatives, for example, the school accreditation programme, are raising standards of football development in schools, and the club accreditation programme is working in partnership with the FAW to try to raise junior club standards across Wales to try to have a minimum standard for all clubs to meet in order to strengthen the structure within junior clubs in Wales.

[163] Moving on to the volunteer structure, obviously no sport can progress without volunteers. I think that it is the same for football as it is for other sports in that these volunteers need to be rewarded. We need to continue to recruit these volunteers and to reward them to keep them within the sport. Football is not unique in that respect. However, there needs to be a review and perhaps a strategy to try to get more volunteers into the sport because, as participation increases, the number of clubs is increasing. We need to make sure that the number of volunteers is also increasing at that rate.

[164] With regard to the performance pathway, it is a complex structure, as Huw mentioned. You do not see the pyramid and you do not see the path from the junior grass-roots level all the way through to national side as one easy move. There probably needs to be some review and rationalisation to ensure that there

are appropriate competition opportunities for youngsters to ensure that they are not overlapped. As Huw mentioned, we need to ensure that the best players are released from the lower clubs so that they can develop, so that clubs can bring in new participants and so that players with talent can move up the structure. It has been apparent in football, as in other sports, that the transition from junior football to senior football is complex. We need to ensure that the clubs are supported here so that they do not lose the juniors. When they have to move to the senior side, many will stop participating. We need to keep them in the structure and help the clubs to move them up to the next level.

[165] To touch on coach education, this has always been a successful programme in football. The recent advent of the UK coaching certificate has created consistency across the four home countries. I think that the football body here is probably one of the leading governing bodies with regards to coach education. According to the last data that were received, there were over 18,000 registered coaches. It would be interesting to know how many of those are active, but they promote coach education through their accreditation schemes to ensure that the clubs have appropriately qualified coaches to deliver within those local structures. More importantly, we must ensure that these coaches are then deployed. Many coaches are coming through the structure, but where are they all working? We need to ensure that there is a system of tracking these coaches to ensure that, given the public money invested in coaches, they are working in the community.

[166] Finally, on facilities, with increased participation, there is a pressure on facilities because they are not increasing at the same rate as that of the participants and the clubs. So, we need a review of that to see where the gaps lie and what can be done to address that.

[167] **Rosemary Butler:** You have covered most of the points. So, we are not just sticking to the point on football development but going through the whole report

[168] **Val Lloyd:** I want to concentrate on the issue of limited playing facilities, or, more specifically, the state of the playing facilities. During evidence-taking, we have heard, on more than one occasion, that the quality of the pitches is deteriorating instead of improving. You have highlighted that by referring to the increased number of people participating in this sport. At the same time, we have heard that local authorities, which are responsible for looking after many of the pitches to the level that we are talking about, allow them to be overused, and uncared

for—this was not the case in the past—and, as a result, they do not have the best surfaces on which to play. Changing facilities are also very outdated—there are exceptions, but they are mainly outdated. I know from my own local authority that these things are put on the back-burner all the time. In the context of football development, which you mentioned, how big an impact is that having and is it likely to slow down the excellent work that is going on otherwise to develop football?

[169] **Ms Roberts:** This is a huge issue. There are more teams, we now have women playing and we are also trying to cater for the senior men, so it is becoming a strain. When you compare the sheer cost of improving pitches and changing facilities with the sports development benefit, which is how it would be compared, in terms of creating a nicer changing environment, what impact, for example, does that have on the number of teams that play? Does that bring in another two teams or does it just create a nicer changing environment for the players? That is a difficult situation.

[170] **Mr Jones:** The issue comes back to fundamental things for me. One issue relates to local government finance and the challenges in that regard. However, there is also an issue—and Denise touched on this—relating to the profile of sport and what we achieve as a result of football development generally. If football and sport are going to have their place at the local level, they need to be able to show local members and local councils what they achieve, and not that they are just fun, but that they have benefits in terms of what they deliver to the community. That is the importance of this review—it gives us and football an opportunity to show the benefits that football provides to the people of Wales. However, given that we do not have a strategy and that the necessary drive and leadership is not in place, local members will ask, ‘Why should we invest heavily in pitches and whatever, instead of in other things?’ People cannot show them the benefits accrued at the end of the day.

[171] **Val Lloyd:** Can I pick up briefly on that? You mentioned the benefits and showing those benefits, which is a good point. I have a few local examples of projects in, shall we say, less-privileged communities that have developed their pitches, their community skills and their coaching skills.

10.00 a.m.

[172] It has made a real difference to the crime levels. When we think of the benefits, we tend to think of the physical benefits for the person playing. However, you can also have spin-offs such as a lowered youth crime rate. I know of a scheme that has demonstrated that. That is a good thing to take up locally along

with encouraging the better use of pitches. Thank you, Huw.

[173] **Laura Anne Jones:** I could not agree more with your last sentence. I think that sport is so important in engaging communities and bringing communities together, breaking down barriers between people from different backgrounds—different ethnic minorities and so on—and it teaches people vital skills such as how to work together. It is hard to measure that, but we all know that it is true; we just need other people to realise that that is what it does.

[174] I would like to comment on something that you said earlier, on changing rooms. You said that it may be a good idea to have nice changing rooms. It is not that we want nice changing rooms; it is necessary to have facilities for disabled people in changing rooms in this day and age, when we are trying to ensure that there is equality of opportunity and so on. So, that is important. I think that that is what Val or Denise was trying to say, as well as ensuring that there are separate male and female changing rooms.

[175] I would like to ask you about something that was discussed with me yesterday, namely the UK coaching certificate that is being rolled out. From what I understand, that comes with a price tag of £300 or £400. As we are trying to get more volunteers to come forward and get into coaching, and support the ones that have been there for many years with the certificates and what they already have—if they have any—we do not want to put them off by saying, 'You have to have this UK coaching certificate'. They might say that that is fine and that they want to improve their skills up to level 3—I think that you have to be at level 3, do you not? However, that price tag will put off a lot of people, particularly those in the areas that we are trying to target. People in Blaenau Gwent, for example, might not be able to fork out that much and, if they are trying to do it for the good of the community, they might think twice about it. We do not want to put people off coming in to help out. Can you comment on that, please?

[176] **Mr Jones:** That is an important issue. The UK Government initiated the UK coaching certificate a couple of years ago to improve the standards and the quality of coaching. If you did a level 2 in football, you would have the same skill levels—though maybe not the same technical levels—as someone with a coaching certificate in rugby, yachting or whatever. So, there was some compatibility. It has had a financial impact, and that is now a big issue. We have had discussions with the Minister, and I know that he has meetings planned with the Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills to discuss this issue,

because the Government has encouraged sport to go down this road, and there are financial implications to it.

[177] **Laura Anne Jones:** So, are you saying that you hope it will be funded through the Welsh Assembly Government?

[178] **Mr Jones:** I would hope so—certainly through education.

[179] **Laura Anne Jones:** That is what we are looking at. Great.

[180] **Owen John Thomas:** May I come in?

[181] **Rosemary Butler:** You said that you did not want to come in, so you are the bottom of the list now, Owen John.

[182] **Lisa Francis:** Laura mentioned that you have to be at level 3 in order to obtain the certificate. Have I understood that correctly?

[183] **Mr Jones:** No, you do not have to achieve that.

[184] **Laura Anne Jones:** If you coach on your own, I think that you have to be at level 3. Is that right?

[185] **Rosemary Butler:** I think that the chief executive can answer that, Laura.

[186] **Lisa Francis:** Presumably, people have to pass a series of tests to achieve this qualification. If they fail, can the money be used again to allow them to apply a second time, free of charge, so that they do not lose that money? What happens to the money if they do not succeed in achieving the qualification?

[187] **Mr Jones:** I might be wrong in this, but I think that the accreditation system is about achieving standards, so it is not like a GCSE where you either pass or fail; it is about being able to show that you have the necessary competencies. Once you have the necessary competencies, then you will then achieve that level.

[188] On Laura's point, I think that it is level 2 that you require to be able to coach on your own. However, I will check that, and I will write to you.

[189] **Lisa Francis:** The point that I was trying to make was that, presumably, someone has to pay a fee to acquire this accreditation. If they fail, is there no way that that money can be rolled over to allow them to have a second attempt?

[190] **Rosemary Butler:** Perhaps we can get that information again.

[191] **Lisa Francis:** It is just a thought.

[192] **Mr Jones:** It is not a case of pass or fail at that particular time; I think that they can continue to try to show that they have achieved the necessary competencies. So, it is more about the development of a portfolio that shows that you have achieved those competencies, rather than sitting an exam at a particular point in time.

[193] **Lisa Francis:** Right, thanks.

[194] **Denise Idris Jones:** I found it interesting what you said, Huw, about how football becomes a major part of a community. You and I know that from our background, do we not? Rhos Aelwyd Football Club was the team, and everyone took part and was proud of it. I have that example in Llandudno at present: Llandudno Football Club has had a new club, and everyone in the area—a Communities First area—has taken part in refurbishing this club and has taken a major role in it. That is hugely important. Manon mentioned that we need to ensure that volunteers are recruited, rewarded and retained to further support the development of female football. How do we do that, Manon? How do we encourage volunteers to do that?

[195] **Ms Roberts:** That is a difficult question, and if we had the answer we would not be in this situation. It is important to value volunteers, and not just to use them week in, week out; it is important that they feel valued, and that they are a member of that community. Even if it is just a word of thanks now and again, it is a small thing, but it will make such a difference to these volunteers. We should also consider rewarding them through continuing to develop them as volunteers, moving them forward if they want to progress into coaching, and to treat them as staff as well, because they are—they are not getting paid for it. By retaining and rewarding them, that message will get out, hopefully, and it would then become easier to recruit additional people. If you look at junior football, the volunteers tend to be the parents; once the son or daughter moves up to the next age group, you have the next lot of volunteers coming through, so, in many cases, they will follow their children through the developmental stage. However, it would be nice for all clubs to have volunteers who stay there so that there is some consistency, but rewarding is key to that. Every governing body would have a different way of rewarding, depending on their circumstance.

[196] **Denise Idris Jones:** In a way, that is to pass that structure on, is it not?

[197] **Ms Roberts:** Yes, and professionalising it as well, which would help.

[198] **Mr Jones:** It is about trying to put in place not just a control and management structure, but also a support structure within the governing body, so that, through that support, you have the 'Thanks, coach' type approach. It is also about supporting clubs in terms of volunteer activity, whether it is how a secretary or a treasurer works, and asking whether they need any help, or any specific training. It is about putting all those

things in place to say, 'You are important, the work that you do is important, and we want to help you'.

[199] **Eleanor Burnham:** I have many questions, but I will restrict myself.

[200] It is such a chicken-and-egg scenario, is it not? You have asserted what we must believe by now, namely that there definitely needs to be a proper structure and strategy, particularly for development. Achieving a good standard of facilities is crucial in this matter, as well as in all the other areas that we have covered, including volunteers. Is it down to the FAW or the FAW trust to audit and assert what facilities are needed for every local authority, or is it down to the local authority? Unless we have decent facilities in every area for these youngsters, you will never get them attracted to the game in the first place. As Val and others have pointed out, many places have such sub-standard facilities that it is difficult to attract people.

10.10 a.m.

[201] Could you also comment on this huge gap, and the fact that Wrexham, Swansea and Cardiff are in a completely different scenario? How do we bridge that gap and interconnect, so that, as Manon said, we can have seamless progression?

[202] **Rosemary Butler:** Just on the point of facilities, when there was a substitute for you at the last meeting, the WLGA agreed that it would perform such an audit for us.

[203] **Eleanor Burnham:** Oh, good. I beg your pardon for that.

[204] **Rosemary Butler:** We raised the issue on your behalf. Will you answer the other points, Huw?

[205] **Mr Jones:** Some of Eleanor's points can be addressed in the next session on technical advice note 16, because one of the elements talked about in TAN 16 is supply/demand assessment of pitch provision at a local level. That is difficult to do centrally, because you can be talking about 5,000 teams and probably about 60 per cent to 80 per cent of local pitches being devoted to football. We tend to think that that is a stock, but it is actually a flow, because some pitches go out of existence, either because they are being converted for other sports or they are being built upon, but there are also new ones being built all the time, and a lot of training takes place on artificial pitches, so it is difficult to assess this nationally.

[206] **Eleanor Burnham:** To come back on this point, would it be up to you as a sports council to undertake all this, or would you expect the FAW to? I mean in respect of football.

[207] **Mr Jones:** We would like to see that profile being raised.

At the end of the day, it will come down to local situations, because there is no point in knowing that you have the right number of pitches in a local authority if they are in the wrong place—if they are at the opposite end of the local authority area. Powys would be a classic example in that regard. Knowing that there are spare pitches in Newtown is no good for someone who lives in Brecon. That type of approach needs to be raised nationally, but the work needs to go on locally, and its profile needs to be raised so that we can address some of those issues in terms of the community benefits that we have just been talking about.

[208] **Eleanor Burnham:** So it would be you who would undertake it, would it?

[209] **Mr Jones:** We would want to see the FAW taking the lead role on that as the governing body.

[210] **Rosemary Butler:** The governing body should do that in conjunction with the sports council and local authorities.

[211] **Mr Jones:** We would provide any help and support necessary.

[212] **Rosemary Butler:** Are there any other points from anyone? I am sorry, I forgot you, Owen John.

[213] **Owen John Thomas:** **Owen John Thomas:** That is Popeth yn iawn. Gwelaf eich bod okay. I see that you have yn clustnodi pum amcan assigned five fundamental sylfaenol ar gyfer pêl-droed i'r objectives to disabled football, anabl, ac mae hynny'n bwysig. and that is very important. One Mae un ohonynt yn sôn am ddod of them talks about bringing ag awdurdodau lleol at ei gilydd local authorities together to i sicrhau partneriaeth. Yr ydych ensure that they work in hefyd yn sôn am anawsterau partnership. You also refer to gyda chlodiant, sydd, wrth gwrs, difficulties with transportation, yn bwysig i bobl anabl. Yr ydych which is, of course, important to hefyd yn sôn am yr angen am disabled people. You also bartneriaethau rhwng mentioned the need for a Ymddiriedolaeth Cymdeithas partnership between the FAW Bêl-droed Cymru a Ffederasiwn Trust and the Federation of Chwaraeon yr Anabl Cymru. A Disability Sport Wales. Is oes unrhyw un yn edrych ar hyn anyone looking at all of this? It i gyd? Mae'n dda bod yr is good that these objectives are amcanion hyn yn bod, ond pwy in place, but who is ensuring sy'n sicrhau eu bod yn cael eu that they are being taken gwthio ymlaen, gan eich bod yn forward, given that you say that dweud nad oes partneriaethau'n there are no partnerships at the bodoli ar hyn o bryd, a bod moment, and that there is a angen am gyfathrebu ac am need for communication and for

reoli'r partneriaethau rhwng awdurdodau lleol? Mae hyn oll yn awgrymu nad yw'r partneriaethau yn bodoli ar hyn o bryd. Pwy ddylai ddod â hyn oll ynghyd a sicrhau eu bod yn digwydd?

[214] Yr wyf wedi gweld pobl anabl yn seiclo ar feiciau sydd wedi'u cysylltu â beiciau pobl abl. Yn aml, yr oedd y bobl hyn yn anabl yn feddyliol yn ogystal ag yn gorfforol, a gwelais eu bod wedi cynhyrfu ac yn mwynhau mynd ar hyd afon Taf ym Mhontcanna. Cefais fy nharo gan sut y gallwch ychwanegu at fywyd rhywun felly, a byddai hynny'n amhosibl heb drefniant tebyg. Hoffwn weld datblygiadau yn y maes hwnnw gyda phêl-droed. Felly, pwy fydd yn cymryd yr awenau?

[215] **Mr Jones:** Yn fy marn i, mae gan y corff llywodraethol y cyfrifoldeb. Ni allwch fod yn gorff llywodraethol am rai pethau ac nid am bethau eraill. Felly, cyfrifoldeb Cymdeithas Bêl-droed Cymru yw, yn fy marn i. Ar ddiwedd y dydd, efallai y bydd yn dod i ryw gytundeb gyda Ffederasiwn Chwaraeon Anabled Cymru, gan mai corff hwnnw sydd â'r wybodaeth i gyd ynglyn â delio gyda phobl anabl, ond, i ddechrau, mae'r cyfrifoldeb ar Gymdeithas Bêl-droed.

[216] **Owen John Thomas:** Ac mae'n gallu ei ddirprwyo i rywun i sicrhau bod pawb yn gwybod pwy sydd yn gyfrifol.

the management of partnerships between local authorities? This all suggests that those partnerships do not exist, so who should bring all of this together to ensure that these things happen?

I have seen disabled people cycling on bikes that were connected to bikes ridden by able-bodied persons. Often, those people had learning difficulties as well as physical difficulties, and I saw that they were excited, and clearly enjoyed going along the River Taff in Pontcanna. I was struck by how you can enrich someone's life with such an activity, which would have been impossible without such an arrangement. I would like to see football developing in this direction. So, who will take the lead on this?

Mr Jones: In my view, the responsibility lies with the governing body. You cannot be a governing body for some things and not for others. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the FAW, in my view. Ultimately, it might come to some agreement with the Federation of Disability Sport Wales, as that body has the knowledge of how to deal with disabled people, but, initially, the responsibility lies with the FAW.

Owen John Thomas: And it can delegate it to someone to ensure that everybody knows who is responsible.

[217] **Mr Jones:** Ie.

Mr Jones: Yes.

[218] **Rosemary Butler:** Are there any other comments that you would like to make, Huw?

[219] **Mr Jones:** Do you want me to touch on some of the other things?

[220] **Rosemary Butler:** I thought that Manon covered most of that. She certainly talked about facilities. Are there any other points that you would like to flesh out?

[221] **Mr Jones:** There are perhaps a couple. One thing that is of some concern in football at the moment—although it is also true for some other sports—is the issue of refereeing and officiating. It is not the sexiest area, to be perfectly honest, in most sports but it is fundamental because, without referees, you cannot play the game and, without officials, particular activities cannot take place. The current culture and attitudes militate against the recruitment of some individuals, particular in terms of the potential abuse that those individuals are going to incur if they undertake refereeing or officiating duties. There certainly needs to be a much higher priority and strategy developed to address that particular issue. We have done some work up in north Wales with the North Wales Coast Football Association, but that was very much at its instigation and a much more structured and strategic approach needs to be adopted for the development of referees and officials throughout the whole of Wales.

[222] **Rosemary Butler:** Can you just explain whether that is happening in other sports, such as rugby for example?

[223] **Mr Jones:** Abuse possibly does not occur in other sports as much as it does in football. Television, what is in the newspapers, and what individuals see has a major bearing on such things. If you are seeing situations where, effectively, you have bullying taking place on a pitch, with a group of players surrounding a referee in the premier league or an international match, you will see that reflected at local level. That needs to be seriously looked at, as the game could suffer serious damage if we cannot recruit referees and officials.

[224] **Eleanor Burnham:** How exactly are you going to do this? It was obvious from what we were told when we visited the stadium in Swansea that football fans are quite different from rugby fans. I have been with the police in Wrexham and have watched them police a match and I used to be a magistrate and we used to ban some fans from going to football matches. It seems to me that this is a very important issue and I am not sure exactly what you have in mind, because I used to deal with kids who were underachievers or truants or whatever and it seemed that their attitude very often reflected peer pressure. It

is a global issue of how they behave and being macho and so on. What exactly do you have in mind? Should it be down to you or should it be down to the FAW?

[225] **Mr Jones:** Ultimately, it has to be down to the governing body of the sport. We have tried to do several things. We have a scheme called chwarae teg, by which we try to ensure good practice across all sports, and where you have young kids shaking hands before matches, after matches and whatever, respecting each other. That is across all sports. However, in terms of football specifically, to be fair to football, it has tried to address this but it has probably not really pushed through some of the issues, such as the 10-yards rule for dissent. That has been tested and played about with but it does not get used that often in football matches. It is very rare to see a referee penalise an individual with 10 yards for dissent.

10.20 a.m.

[226] Those sorts of things need to be done far more. The issue of dissent and abuse of referees need to be far higher in terms of the use of yellow cards and so forth. That is an approach that the governing body needs to adopt in many instances, to say, 'This will not be tolerated on the football field. If you want to do it, do it somewhere else; you will not do it on a football field.'

[227] **Eleanor Burnham:** So, in many respects, these referees who are suffering need to have the support of the FAW. I am very surprised that the FAW is not supporting them because, surely, this is absolutely crucial to the development of the game.

[228] **Laura Anne Jones:** I could not agree more. It is a huge problem. Refereeing, its problems, and the fact that the media pick up on them is something that I have highlighted many times in this committee. Premier footballers are role models, whether they like it or not, and they can make it seem okay to do this. I agree with what you said about penalising them after an event and issuing a yellow card and so forth, but are you taking a hands-on approach to deal with it at all levels—in schools, at the grass roots, and all the way up—by, for example, when you are training, getting each player to take it in turns to be the referee so that they experience what it is like to be a referee at such matches? Perhaps being in that position and getting abuse from fellow players would make players realise that it is not on. I do not know; it is just an idea.

[229] **Mr Jones:** I think that that is a very good point, Laura. It is encouraged within the national curriculum for physical education. How well it is adopted in particular schools is a matter for debate, but it is certainly advocated as good practice.

[230] **Rosemary Butler:** The problem is often not with the

children, but the parents who are on the sidelines.

[231] **Laura Anne Jones:** Yes.

[232] **Owen John Thomas:** Mae'n siwr gennyf y byddwch yn cytuno bod gwyllo gêmâu ar y teledu lle bo chwaraewyr rhyngwladol yn cwmpasu'r dyfarnwr, yn dangos bod rhaid gwneud hyn o'r brig i lawr. Nid yr FAW sy'n rheoli sut mae chwaraewyr Lerpwl, Manceinion ac yn y blaen, yn ymddwyn. Felly, mae'n rhaid mynd ymhellach na hynny, drwy weithio o'r brig i lawr ac o'r gwaelod i fyny, fel y dywedodd Laura. Yn yr ysgolion dylid dysgu plant i barchu ei gilydd pan fyddant yn chwarae, ac ysgogi'r syniad o gyfnewid crysau ar ôl y gêm, cymeradwyo'r tîm arall ac ati. Mae llawer o hynny'n digwydd yn barod, ond mae hyn yn broblem hyd yn oed mewn gêmâu rygbi. Yn ôl pennawd yn y *Western Mail* yr wythnos diwethaf, mae llawer mwy o drais yn awr mewn gêmâu rygbi ar lefel isel. Mae'n rhywbeth y mae angen inni ei daclo, sy'n air da i'w ddefnyddio yn y cyd-destun hwn.

Owen John Thomas: I am sure that you would agree that watching games on television, in which international players surround the referee, demonstrates that we have to work from the top down. The FAW does not control how the players of Liverpool, Manchester and other teams behave. Therefore, we have to go wider than that, and work from the top down and from the bottom upwards, as Laura was saying. In schools, we should teach children to respect each other when they are playing, and encourage them to exchange shirts at the end of the match, to applaud the other team and so forth. A lot of this already happens, but this is a problem even in rugby matches. According to a headline the *Western Mail* last week, there is now much more violence in rugby matches at the junior level. We need to tackle that, if I can use that expression.

[233] **Rosemary Butler:** No football puns today. [*Laughter.*]

[234] **Owen John Thomas:** Dylid gweithio o'r gwaelod i fyny ac o'r brig i lawr.

Owen John Thomas: We should work from the bottom up and from the top down.

[235] **Ms Roberts:** Soniwyd yn gynharach am achredu clybiau gydag Ymddiriedolaeth yr FAW. Mae'r ymddiriedolaeth wedi anfon CD-ROM i 1,800 o glybiau pobl ifanc yng Nghymru ac un o'r templadau y mae'n ei roi yw cod ymddygiad ar gyfer

Ms Roberts: Earlier, club accreditation with the FAW Trust was mentioned. The trust has sent out a CD-ROM to 1,800 junior clubs in Wales and one of the templates that it issues is a code of conduct for players, coaches and parents. Parents

chwaraewyr, hyfforddwyr a rhieni. Mae'n rhaid i rieni a phob clwb lofnodi'r cod ymddygiad i ddweud y byddant yn dilyn y rheolau. Felly, mae'n dechrau dod o waelod y pyramid, ond fel y dywedasoeh, mae'n rhaid iddo ddod o'r brig.

[236] **Owen John Thomas:** Credaf fod ambell athro ysgol wedi bod mewn trafferth mewn rhyw ffordd neu'i gilydd yn y gorffennol.

Owen John Thomas: I think that some school teachers have got into difficulty in some way or another with this in the past.

[237] **Rosemary Butler:** Speaking from personal experience, are you? Did you want to make any comments, Minister?

[238] **Alun Pugh:** At the end.

[239] **Rosemary Butler:** That is the end. There are no other speakers. I remind you that you are here as a member of the committee, not as the Minister.

[240] **Alun Pugh:** As we move to the new structures, I am conscious that I will have to make a formal response to the committee's report.

[241] It is fair to say that there are lots of key performance indicators that we all use as the Government and sports council to measure the health and the performance of various sports. If you look at some of the key performance indicators in football, you will see that they are very healthy. Interest in football in Wales is very high and we are seeing some encouraging developments, with a number of people playing the game. I am delighted that our investment through the FAW Trust is reaping big benefits in terms of the number of girl players coming through, which is good. In many measures, the game is healthy, and it is also fair to say that there is more money in football now than there has ever been in the past. So lack of money is not a problem, although many of us have reservations about the distribution of that money within the game.

[242] One key performance indicator is the performance of the national team, and it is entirely unfair to compare the performance of Wales with that of England, Germany or Italy, because you expect the likes of those teams to qualify time and again for World Cup and European games, but smaller nations, inevitably, with a smaller population to draw upon, will not get that level of consistent success in qualification. However, it is fair to point out that Wales has not qualified for a major professional European tournament or World Cup since 1958, if memory serves

me, which is nearly half a century ago, whereas other comparable small European nations, such as Denmark, Ireland and Scotland, do occasionally qualify. So why do these nations, which are comparable in terms of size and wealth, occasionally qualify and we do not? We can always point to an individual qualification attempt, and say perhaps it was the run of the luck or the ball, or perhaps a Scottish forward punching the ball in the back of the net in Anfield. However, to have that consistency of non-performance across half a century is worrying. It is not about knee-jerk reactions such as sacking the managers or the goal-keepers, but structure, as the chief executive of the Sports Council for Wales said, is clearly important.

[243] As far as coaching is concerned, Huw is quite right, it is an issue that we have to resolve jointly as a Government across education. We want to see more coaches, better coaches, and we have a coaching plan, but most coaches do not earn a living from the game. Most coaches are volunteers, and many of them are on low incomes, so we need to have a situation where people—and especially people on low incomes and especially the coaches of tomorrow, the 18 or 19-year-olds coming out of education—are properly tied into this national qualification framework, which we all want to see. We all want to see our nation succeed, and there is a case for public money to be invested in the sport—at the grass-roots level, rather than at the level of the professional game—but I will keep more detailed comments until we formally respond. Thank you, Chair.

[244] **Rosemary Butler:** Thank you. I would also like to thank Huw and Manon for coming this morning, it has been a good debate and I also thank the Members for their contributions. Before we finish, we need to wish Wales the best of luck tonight in playing against Cyprus, and we hope that they win.

[245] I will remind Members, Eleanor, that information about the budget scrutiny session was sent out by hand on 4 October, with further e-mail reminders on 5, 9, 10 and 11 October, and I also have a sample of the bright red font, reminding us that it was on. So, if you could look at that.

[246] **Eleanor Burnham:** I will look into it immediately.

[247] **Rosemary Butler:** We will now break for coffee.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 10.28 a.m. a 10.47 a.m.
The meeting adjourned between 10.28 a.m. and 10.47 a.m.*