

Consultation on petition P-03-262 Wales Peace Institute  
Response from Meeting of Friends in Wales

*Crynwyr*

*Quakers*



*Cyfarfod y Cyfeillion yng Nghymru*

*Meeting of Friends in Wales*

10 December, 2011

Abigail Phillips,  
Clerk to the Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales,  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff. CF99 1NA

Dear Sir / Madam,

**Proposal to Investigate the Potential for and Practicality of establishing a Peace Institute for Wales: Submission from Quakers in Wales**

Quakers in Wales have welcomed the opportunity to respond to the above proposal prior to consideration of this matter by the Petitions Committee of the National Assembly for Wales.

The following is a composite response, including minutes from Quaker Meetings at both the Area and Local Meeting levels from across Wales. It is sent on behalf of Meeting of Friends (Quakers) in Wales, the representative body delegated with the task of communicating with the National Assembly and other public and voluntary organisations on behalf of Quakers in Wales.

“The Religious Society of Friends has been concerned for over 350 years to promote alternatives to war, reconciliation between peoples and constructive steps to a lasting peace. We hope that the proposed Peace Institute may be able to throw light on ways to attain these goals, without detriment to its own impartiality and integrity.

We also believe that its establishment will contribute to the long-standing internationalism of people in Wales, and assist in keeping this great and honourable tradition alive.

Quakers fully support the establishment of an independent and non-partisan Wales Peace Institute along the lines of the existing Peace Institutes of Flanders and of Catalonia, and the proposed linkage of the new Institute with the National Assembly for Wales. We think this development is important, highly desirable and feasible.

In particular, we welcome wider and deeper research being conducted on the direct and indirect consequences of military installations and projects situated in Wales, and the opportunity this will provide for evaluating on a better informed basis both them and the international impact of Wales. Academic freedom will be essential to the independent functioning of the Institute as a non-partisan authority on peace issues.

It is essential that the Institute is properly funded, and has a clear purpose. We suggest that the Welsh Assembly provide funding for a feasibility study to explore possible structures, based on the Peace Institutes in other countries, and future funding streams.

The terms of reference of the Institute should be flexible and wide ranging to enable rather than limit its scope but would include:-

- A relationship with the National Assembly to provide independent evaluation of the potential effects of its actions and decisions in respect to upholding peace and human rights:
- Examination of the impact on Wales of UK defence and foreign policy decisions – for example, the training of foreign military who might be involved in human rights abuses;
- A reference point and resource for people and organisations providing information about peace, disarmament, conflict resolution and human rights issues with channels to allow enquiry into the arms trade, human rights, nuclear disarmament, upholding the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, etc.
- Direct relationships with NGOs, UN Agencies, other Peace Institutes and networks with similar organisations that contribute to international knowledge of and activity for and the promotion of peace.
- Educational provision in respect to peace studies, conflict resolution through non-violence, awareness of human rights; building international relations through cultural contact, cooperative deals etc. Consultation status in respect to the national curriculum of Wales.
- Freedom to seek independent financing through commissioned research and to utilise funds and resources in the area of peace-building.”

We note that those who submit written evidence may be called upon to supplement this with oral evidence to the Committee. Should this be necessary, Meeting of Friends in Wales would be willing to consider this possibility.

Yours faithfully,

*Jane Harries*

Jane Harries

(South Wales Area Meeting,

on behalf of Meeting of Friends in Wales.)