

PET(4) WPI 58
Petitions Committee

Consultation on petition P-03-262 Wales Peace Institute
Response from Stephen Thomas

10 December 2011

Dear Ms Phillips

I am writing to comment on the petition for a Wales Peace Institute (your reference: P-03-262). Having given evidence to the Petitions Committee in person at the beginning of the process, I would like to add two further points that have occurred to me over the last few months.

One question raised by the Committee was the Institute's possible remit. Therefore, I will concentrate here on the importance of such an Institute as a means of researching economic matters that are relevant to the people of Wales and the Assembly.

It would be socially, as well as economically, beneficial to conduct research into those Welsh people who have been in Armed Forces and who often face health problems, behavioural problems and financial problems in returning to civilian life. It would be very useful to look at how this affects them, their families and their communities (and the cost that emanates from this).

There has been a lot of talk recently about poor value for money in relation to the Ministry of Defence in the UK as regards major projects undertaken by the Army, the Navy and the British Armed Forces. On a Welsh level, some of the same questions arise where our Government in Cardiff Bay has invested substantial amounts of money. Some examples of this are ParcAberporth in Ceredigion (the centre for unmanned aerial vehicles or 'drones') and St Athan (the DARA and Matrix projects). Have these projects been an effective means of using Welsh money?

These are some examples of research, co-ordinated independently by the proposed type of Peace Institute, with input from academics from Welsh universities, which would be very valuable to the Assembly and the people of Wales generally – the type of work that is not being given sufficient priority at present.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Thomas