



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

Y Pwyllgor Cymunedau, Cydraddoldeb a Llywodraeth Leol **The Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee**

Dydd Mercher, 23 Mai 2012
Wednesday, 23 May 2012

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Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog Rhif 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd o'r Cyfarfod
Motion under Standing Order No. 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public from the Meeting

Cofnodir y trafodion hyn yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynndi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal,
cynhwysir cyfieithiad Saesneg o gyfraniadau yn y Gymraeg.

These proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee.
In addition, an English translation of Welsh speeches is included.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol**Committee members in attendance**

Peter Black	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Janet Finch-Saunders	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Mike Hedges	Llafur Labour
Mark Isherwood	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Bethan Jenkins	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Ann Jones	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair)
Gwyn R. Price	Llafur Labour
Kenneth Skates	Llafur Labour
Rhodri Glyn Thomas	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Joyce Watson	Llafur Labour

Eraill yn bresennol**Others in attendance**

Emyr Davies	Uwch-gynhyrchydd a Chyfarwyddwr Cwmni Rondo Executive Producer and Company Director of Rondo
Peter Gomer	Cynghorydd Polisi Interim (Hamdden, Diwylliant, Twristiaeth a Threftadaeth), Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru Interim Policy Adviser (Leisure, Culture, Tourism and Heritage), Welsh Local Government Association
David Phenis	Rheolwr Datblygu Cymunedol, Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru Community Development Manager, Welsh Local Government Association
Gareth Williams	Prif Weithredwr, Rondo Media Chief Executive, Rondo Media

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

Sarah Bartlett	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Rhys Iorwerth	Y Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service
Marc Wyn Jones	Clerc Clerk

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.29 a.m.
The meeting began at 9.29 a.m.*

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon Introductions, Apologies and Substitutions

[1] **Ann Jones:** Good morning, everybody. Welcome to the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee. I will make the usual housekeeping announcements. I ask Members around the table to switch off their mobile phones and BlackBerrys, as they affect the translation and broadcasting equipment. This is a formal meeting, so we do not have to touch the microphones—they will come on automatically. We are not expecting the fire alarm to operate, so, if it does, we will wait and take our instructions from the ushers. The assembly point is by the Pierhead building. You can follow me, because you can rest assured that I will be one of the first out of the building if the fire alarm sounds. We have not received any apologies. Would Members like to declare any interests that they have not already declared during this inquiry? I see that you do not. The Assembly operates bilingually, so we have interpretation facilities. Channel 0 is for the original language, while channel 1 is for interpretation from Welsh to English; feel free to use whichever language you wish.

9.30 a.m.

Ymchwiliad i Uwch Gynghrair Cymru—Sesiwn Dystiolaeth Inquiry into the Welsh Premier League—Evidence Session

[2] **Ann Jones:** I am delighted to welcome Gareth Williams, who is the chief executive of Rondo Media, and Emyr Davies, who is the executive producer and company director. Thank you both for your paper. Do either of you have a brief opening statement that you would like to make, or are you happy to go straight to questions?

[3] **Mr Williams:** Rydym yn hapus i fynd yn syth i'r cwestiynau. Rydym yn falch iawn o fod yma. Mae Rondo wedi bod yn cynhyrchu cyfres *Sgorio* ers i'r cwmni ddechrau. A dweud y gwir, cyfres *Sgorio* ddaeth â ni at ein gilydd. Roedd Opus yn gwmni yng Nghaerdydd a Nant yn gwmni yn y gogledd, ac un o'r ceisiadau cyntaf y gwnaethom fel cwmni Rondo oedd ar gyfer y cytundeb pêl-droed bedair blynedd yn ôl. Rydym wedi cyrraedd diwedd y cytundeb cynhyrchu hwnnw yn awr, ac rydym yn edrych ymlaen at barhau i weithio ar y gyfres. Rydym yn croesawu'r cyfle i fod yn rhan o'r ymgynghoriad arbennig hwn.

Mr Williams: We are happy to move straight to questions. We are very pleased to be here. Rondo has been producing the *Sgorio* series since the company was established. To be honest, it was *Sgorio* that brought us together. Opus was a company based in Cardiff, while Nant was based in north Wales, and one of the first commissions that we went for as Rondo was for the football contract four years ago. We have now reached the end of that production contract and we are looking forward to continuing to work on the series. We welcome the opportunity to be a part of this important inquiry.

[4] **Ann Jones:** S4C has told us that it believes that the standard of football in the Welsh Premier League has improved considerably over the last few seasons. What are your views on this, based on your experience of producing coverage of matches since 2008?

[5] **Mr Davies:** Rwy'n credu yn ddiameduol fod safon y chwarae wedi gwella dros y pedair blynedd diwethaf. Nid oes rhaid i chi gymryd fy ngair am hynny; holwch rywun o safon John Hartson, sydd wedi cynrychioli ei wlad dros 50 o weithiau, wedi chwarae i rai o glybiau mwyaf Prydain, wedi ymddangos yn rownd derfynol Ewropeaidd

Mr Davies: Without doubt, I think that the quality of play has improved over the past four years. You do not have to take my word for that; ask someone of the calibre of John Hartson, who has represented his country over 50 times, has played for some of the major British clubs, has appeared in an European final and has scored in one of those

ac wedi sgorio mewn gêm yn y rownd derfynol. Pan dderbyniodd John y gwahoddiad i fod yn arbenigwr ar y gyfres, roeddwn yn meddwl y byddai'n rhoi'r ffidil yn y to ar ôl rhyw chwe rhaglen. Fodd bynnag, y gwir amdani yw ei fod wedi cael modd i fyw. Mae'n canmol safon y chwarae i'r cymylau; tipyn uwch na'r canfyddiad am y gynghrair yn gyffredinol.

[6] **Mr Williams:** Un peth buom yn ei drafod cyn dod mewn yma yn awr oedd yr hyn sydd wedi bod yn digwydd ar wefan *Sgorio* pan mae John, Malcolm, Morgan a Dylan yn proffwydo sgôr y gwahanol gemau. Maent hefyd yn gwahodd nifer o arbenigwyr eraill a chefnogwyr pêl-droed i gymryd rhan, ac mae'n ddiddorol pa mor anghyson ac anghywir y maent. Pe byddai'n hawdd proffwydo beth sy'n mynd i ddigwydd, byddent yn cael sgorau uwch. Mae'n arwydd da bod amrywiaeth yn y canlyniadau pan fo'r clybiau'n chwarae ei gilydd.

[7] **Peter Black:** You expressed concern in your paper that countries with much smaller populations than Wales are higher on the Union of European Football Associations list that ranks the standard of European leagues. What can be done to improve that situation?

[8] **Mr Davies:** O ddarllen y dystiolaeth sydd wedi cael ei rhoi gerbron y pwyllgor hwn, rwy'n credu bod nifer o syniadau da wedi ymddangos. Un ohonynt yw'r gwaith arbennig y mae Osian Roberts yn ei wneud o ran hyfforddi. Nid wyf yn gwybod a welsoch *Sgorio* nos Lun, ond dangosasom sesiwn hyfforddi'r hyfforddwyr yr oedd Osian yn ei chyflwyno gydag enwau fel Marcel Desailly a Jens Lehmann yn rhan o'r cwrs hwnnw. Rwy'n credu bod rhaid inni fod yn fwy cynhwysfawr o ran yr holl gyrff sy'n bodoli—yr ymddiriedolaeth, y gymdeithas bêl-droed ac Uwch-gynghrair Cymru.

[9] O bosibl, dylem ddefnyddio'r amrywiaeth o arbenigedd hyfforddi sydd ar gael; er enghraifft, yn y pum neu chwe wythnos sy'n arwain at y gemau rhagbrofol, gyda chydweithrediad y clybiau, byddai rhywrai'n gallu dod i mewn gyda dulliau gwahanol o hyfforddi a cheisio cynnal sesiynau gyda'r chwaraewyr. O bosibl, byddai hynny'n gwella eu gallu a'u sgiliau ar gyfer y gemau Ewropeaidd. Mae rhai yn dadlau nad yw'r tymor yn addas. Roedd yn ddiwedd tymor y penwythnos diwethaf, ac

finals. When John accepted the invitation to appear as a pundit on the series, I thought that he would give up after about six programmes. However, the truth is that he has enjoyed himself immensely. He praises the quality of play to the skies; it is far better than the general perception of the league would lead you to believe.

Mr Williams: One thing that we discussed before coming in here this morning was what has been happening on the *Sgorio* website when John, Malcolm, Morgan and Dylan predict the scores of the various games. They also ask a number of other experts and football fans to take part in the discussion, and it is interesting how inconsistent and wrong they are. If it were easy to predict the results, their scores would be higher. It is a good sign that there is a variation in the results when the clubs play each other.

Mr Davies: From reading the evidence that has been submitted to the committee, I think that a number of good ideas have appeared. One of those is the excellent work that Osian Roberts is doing with regard to coaching. I do not know whether you saw *Sgorio* on Monday night, but we showed a clip of a coaches' coaching session that Osian was presenting, with names like Marcel Desailly and Jens Lehmann as part of that course. I think that we need to be more inclusive with regard to all of the bodies that exist—the trust, the football association and the Welsh Premier League.

We should, perhaps, use the variety of coaching expertise that is available; for example, in the five or six weeks leading up to the preliminary rounds, with the co-operation of the clubs, some people could come in with different coaching methods to hold training sessions with the players. That might improve their ability and skills for the European games. Some argue that the season is not suitable. It was the end of the season last weekend, and in five or six weeks' time they will start once again. That is nothing

mewn pum neu chwe wythnos byddant yn dechrau unwaith eto. Nid yw hynny'n ddim byd newydd yn y byd pêl-droed, ond mae cynghreiriau haf, ac maent hanner ffordd drwy eu rhaglen. Efallai eu bod ychydig yn fwy *match fit*, ond nid wyf yn gwybod. Efallai fod mwy o broblemau na rhagoriaethau yn perthyn i gynghrair yr haf a'r math hwnnw o strwythur.

[10] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Mae gennyf gwestiwn am y strwythur 12 tîm a gyflwynwyd i'r uwch-gynghrair yn 2010. Cawsom dystiolaeth gryf yn y sesiwn ddiwethaf gan gynrychiolwyr o Gaerfyrddin a Bangor eu bod yn teimlo bod 12 yn rhy ychydig o dimau, a bod sefyllfa ar ddiwedd tymor lle gallai timau fod wedi chwarae ei gilydd hyd at wyth o weithiau a bod y canlynwyr yn colli diddordeb wedyn. Beth yw eich barn chi am y fformat hwnnw?

[11] **Mr Davies:** Gan siarad o safbwynt personol ac o ran darlledu'r gynghrair, rwy'n credu ei bod bellach yn dipyn mwy cyffrous ers sefydlu'r 12 Disglair. Rwyf hefyd yn gweld bod problemau o ran y nifer o weithiau y mae clybiau yn chwarae ei gilydd. A yw hynny oherwydd strwythur y gynghrair, neu a oes gormod o gystadlaethau? Dim ond pedair gwaith y byddent yn chwarae ei gilydd yn strwythur cynghrair y 12 Disglair. Fodd bynnag, â chwpan y gynghrair hefyd, a hwnnw fel rheol yn cael ei rannu'n rhanbarthau neu'n ardaloedd, wrth reswm, mae mwy o siawns y bydd y clybiau yn chwarae ei gilydd hyd at chwech o weithiau—a chan ystyried cwpan Cymru hefyd, hyd at saith o weithiau. Nid wyf yn siŵr iawn beth yw'r ateb. O ddarllen tystiolaethau'r lleill, mae Bangor a Chaerfyrddin yn enghreifftiau o glybiau sy'n awyddus i ymestyn y gynghrair i 16. Gellir edrych ar hynny. Fodd bynnag, o ran cyffro a strwythur y gynghrair fel y mae ar hyn o bryd, rwy'n credu ei bod yn gweithio, oherwydd mae bron pob gêm yn bwysig. Nid yw hynny'n digwydd hyd yn oed yn uwch-gynghrair Lloegr.

[12] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** A ydych fel cwmni wedi gwneud unrhyw astudiaeth o nifer y gwylwyr? A ydych yn cadw'r gwylwyr trwy'r tymor, neu a ydych chi'n tueddu eu colli tua diwedd y tymor? Eto,

new in the world of football, but there are summer leagues, and they are half way through their programme. Perhaps they are a little more match fit, but I do not know. Perhaps there are more problems than merits to a summer league and that type of structure.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: I will ask a question about the 12-team structure that was introduced to the premiership in 2010. We were presented with strong evidence in the last session by representatives from Carmarthen and Bangor that they feel that 12 teams is too few, and that there is a situation at the end of the season where teams have played each other up to eight times and the followers then lose interest. What are your views on that format?

Mr Davies: Speaking from a personal perspective and from the point of view of broadcasting the league, I think that it is much more exciting now since the establishment of the Super 12. I also see that there are problems in terms of the number of times clubs play each other. Is that due to the structure of the league, or are there too many competitions? They would only play each other four times in the Super 12 structure. However, with the league cup as well, which is usually divided into regions or areas, of course, there is a greater chance that the clubs will play each other up to six times—and considering the Welsh Cup too, up to seven times. I am not sure what the solution is. Having read the evidence given by the others, Bangor and Carmarthen are examples of clubs that want to extend the league to 16. That can be looked at. However, in terms of the excitement and structure of the league as it is, I think that it works, because almost every game is important. That does not happen even in the English premier league.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Has your company undertaken any study of the number of viewers? Do you keep the viewers throughout the season, or do you tend to lose them towards the end of the season? Again, the

mae'r dystiolaeth a gawsom gan y clybiau yn awgrymu bod y ffigyrau o ran pobl sydd yn mynd i'r gemau wedi gostwng y tymor hwn, ond wedi codi yn ystod y tymor cyntaf gyda'r fformat 12 Disglair. A oes unrhyw batrwm o ran y gwylwyr?

[13] **Mr Williams:** Ar gyfer darllediadau dydd Sadwrn, rydym yn edrych ar gyfartaledd ar gyrhaeddiad o 37,000 o wylwyr ar gyfer unrhyw raglen. Mae'r dystiolaeth rydym wedi bod yn edrych arni'n fwy diweddar yn ymwneud â chyfansoddiad y gwylwyr hynny. Mae 60% o'r rhai sy'n gwyllo'r gwasanaeth ar brynhawn Sadwrn yn ddi-Gymraeg. Mae'r rhaglen uchafbwyntiau nosweithiol a oedd ar nos Fawrth bellach yn ôl ar nos Lun. Gallwn fanylu a gweld beth yw'r tueddiadau o ran gwahanol batrymau yn ystod y tymor ac adrodd yn ôl os yw hynny'n ddefnyddiol i chi. Byddwn yn meddwl bod y cyfartaledd yn weddol gyson o ran patrwm gwyllo drwy'r tymor yn ei gyfanrwydd.

[14] **Mr Davies:** Nid oes gennyf tystiolaeth i'r gwrthwyneb.

[15] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Felly, o ran yr ymateb rydych yn ei gael fel cwmni, nid oes tystiolaeth bod gwylwyr yn syrffedu ar weld y timau yn chwarae yn erbyn ei gilydd yn gyson.

[16] **Mr Williams:** Gan feddwl pa mor aml mae Dylan Ebenezer a rheiny yn trydaru am bob dim, nid wyf yn gweld llif cyson o negeseuon ar hynny.

[17] **Mr Davies:** Rwyf wedi gweld yr ymateb yn y dystiolaeth a gyflwynwyd i'r pwyllgor hwn. Rwy'n derbyn y pwynt bod, o bosibl, mwy o botensial ar gyfer amrywiaeth pe bai 16 yn y gynghrair. Fodd bynnag, nid ydym fel cwmni yn derbyn cwynion am y gemau o ran y timau sy'n chwarae.

[18] **Bethan Jenkins:** Rydych wedi sôn rhywfaint yn barod am strwythurau'r haf a'r drafodaeth ynghylch hynny. Rydym wedi cael tystiolaeth gan yr FAW sy'n gefnogol iawn i geisio treialu hyn, ond mae cynrychiolwyr tîm Caerfyrddin wedi dweud wrthym eu bod yn hollol yn erbyn hynny oherwydd bod chwaraewyr eisiau cael brêc dros yr haf a chael amser i baratoi at y tymor.

evidence that we received from the clubs suggests that the figures of people who attend games fell this season, but increased during the first season of the Super 12 format. Is there any pattern in terms of the viewers?

Mr Williams: For the coverage on Saturdays, we are looking at an average of 37,000 viewers for any programme. The evidence that we have been looking at more recently is to do with the composition of those viewers. Some 60% of those who watch the service on a Saturday afternoon are non-Welsh speakers. The evening highlights programme that was on Tuesdays is now back on Mondays. We can look in detail at that to see what the different trends are and report back if that would be of use to you. We would think that the average would be fairly consistent in terms of viewers throughout the season as a whole.

Mr Davies: I have no evidence to the contrary.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: So, in terms of the response that you get as a company, there is no evidence that viewers are fed up with seeing the teams playing each other regularly.

Mr Williams: Bearing in mind how often Dylan Ebenezer and so on tweet about everything, I do not see a steady stream of messages on that.

Mr Davies: I have seen the response in the evidence submitted to this committee. I accept the point that there may be greater potential for variety if there were a league of 16. However, as a company, we do not receive complaints about the games in relation to the teams that are playing.

Bethan Jenkins: You have already mentioned the summer league structure and the discussions around that. We have had some evidence from the FAW that is very supportive of trying to trial this, but the representatives of the Carmarthen team told us that they were completely against that because the players want a break over the summer and time to prepare for the next

Hefyd, roedd tystiolaeth eu bod yn draddodiadol ac yn hoffi'r tymhorau fel ag y maent. Beth yw eich barn chi fel cwmni am hyn, o ran yr ochr ddarlledu, a sut y byddai hynny'n gweithio dros yr haf?

[19] **Mr Williams:** I ddychwelyd at bwynt Rhodri, pe byddai'r darlledu yn canolbwyntio ar yr haf, byddai'n anos cael gwylwyr. Rydym yn gweld yn aml ei bod yn anodd cael ystod o wylwyr cyson ar gyfer darllediadau yn ystod tymor yr haf. Mae hynny'n dueddiad y mae S4C yn gweld yn gyffredinol, a dyna pam mae'n ailddarlledu rhaglenni yn eithaf cyson dros gyfnod yr haf. Felly, nid wyf yn credu byddai hynny'n cynyddu potensial y gwylwyr ar gyfer brand *Sgorio*.

[20] **Mr Davies:** Yn y bôn, cwestiwn i S4C yn hytrach nag i ni yw hwnnw. Nid yw'n gwneud dim gwahaniaeth i ni o ran pryd rydym yn cynhyrchu'r cynnyrch, ond os ydych yn gofyn am farn bersonol, credaf fod problemau dirifedi o geisio newid i'r haf. Gwn eu bod wedi gwneud hynny yn Iwerddon, ond nid yw hynny wedi bod heb ei broblemau. Yn wir, *the jury is out*, o ran a yw hynny wedi bod yn llwyddiannus ai peidio. Mae rhai yn dweud iddo fod yn llwyddiannus, ond mae eraill yn dweud y byddent yn hoffi dychwelyd at y dull mwy traddodiadol yn syth bin.

[21] **Bethan Jenkins:** A fyddech chi'n croesawu ymchwil i hynny, neu a oes ymchwil eisoes yn digwydd?

[22] **Mr Davies:** Ni fyddai'n ddrwg o beth i ymchwilio i hyn, ond efallai mai cwestiwn i S4C yw hwnnw. Fodd bynnag, os nad yw'n mynd i gael ei ddarlledu, o safbwynt y teledu, nid oes gwerth iddo. Eto i gyd, nid yw hynny'n gymaint o broblem o ran y 12 Disglair—ond y 12 Disglair yw pinacl y pyramid. Byddai'n rhaid i'r holl gynghreiriau eraill newid eu patrymau wedyn. A fyddai hynny'n bosibl yn y lle cyntaf, a faint o amser byddai hynny'n ei gymryd? Byddai hynny fel ceisio newid o yrru ar y chwith i yrru ar y dde, ond mewn camau. Ni fyddai hynny'n gweithio. Byddai'n rhaid i'r cyfan ddigwydd ar yr un pryd a gallai hynny greu pob math o broblemau.

season. They also said that they were traditional and liked the seasons as they are. What is your opinion as a company about this, in terms of the broadcasting side, and how that would work over the summer?

Mr Williams: Going back to Rhodri's point, if the broadcasting was focused on the summer, it would be more difficult to get viewers. We often see that it is difficult to get a range of regular viewers for broadcast over the summer months. That is a tendency that S4C sees generally, which is why it repeats programmes fairly often over the summer period. So, I do not think that it would increase the potential for viewers for the *Sgorio* brand.

Mr Davies: That is basically a question for S4C rather than for us. It does not make any difference to us in terms of when we produce the material, but if you are asking for my personal opinion, I think that there are countless problems in trying to change the season to the summer. I know that they have done that in Ireland, but it has not been without its problems. The jury is out in terms of whether that has been a success or not. Some believe that it has been a success, but others say that they would like to return to the more traditional method straight away.

Bethan Jenkins: Would you welcome some research on that, or is any research already being undertaken?

Mr Davies: It would not be a bad thing to have some research into this, but perhaps that is a question for S4C. However, if it is not going to be broadcast, from a television point of view, there is no value to it. Having said that, it is not so much of a problem in terms of the Super 12—but the Super 12 is the peak of the pyramid. All of the other leagues would then have to change their patterns. Would that be possible and how long would that take? That would be like trying to change from driving on the left to driving on the right, but in stages. That would not work. Everything would have to be done at the same time and that could create all kinds of problems.

[23] **Mike Hedges:** Local leagues cannot change the season from the winter to the summer, because they share pitches with cricket teams. The problem for the Welsh Premier League is that it is competing against the English premiership, and now that pubs and clubs can show live matches by getting feeds from Greece and Ireland, people are being dragged away to watch Barclays Premier League games, instead of either watching your games live or going to the matches. Indeed, a large number of people from north Wales travel to Merseyside and Manchester every Saturday. So, if you were not competing against what is arguably the best league in the world, the English premiership, the teams might get better crowds who have more interest in the matches. That would also help European football when they are playing in the middle of their season, because they would not have to get people back from their holidays to play.

[24] **Mr Davies:** Rwy'n credu eich bod wedi defnyddio un o'r geiriau arwyddocaol iawn, sef 'gwyliau'. Mae'r haf yn gyfnod o wyliau, felly os yw pobl yn mynd bant ar eu gwyliau yn ystod yr haf, nid ydynt yn mynd i droi lan i wyllo gemau pêl-droed. Mae chwaraeon traddodiadol eraill yn digwydd yn yr haf—rydych wedi enwi criced—ac, wrth reswm, byddai newid y tymor pêl-droed yn creu pob math o broblemau i'r clybiau hynny sy'n rhannu eu hadnoddau gyda chlybiau criced ac yn y blaen.

Mr Davies: I think that you used one of the very significant words, that is 'holidays'. The summer is a holiday period, so if people are going away on holidays during the summer, they are not going to turn up to watch football matches. Other traditional sports take place during the summer—you mentioned cricket—and changing the football season would of course create all sorts of problems for those clubs that share facilities with cricket clubs and so on.

9.45 a.m.

[25] Nid oes gennyf wrthwynebiad i gael rhagor o waith ymchwil i bêl-droed yn yr haf. Mae gan bobl, wrth reswm, eu hoff glybiau, ond yr hyn yr hoffwn ei weld, a'r hyn sydd wedi cael ei awgrymu, yw y byddai'n braf pe gallent fabwysiadu clwb lleol hefyd. Mae clybiau fel rheol yn chwarae gartref bob yn ail wythnos. Os ydych yn ddeiliad tocyn tymor gyda Manceinion Unedig neu Lerpwl, er enghraifft, rydych yn mynd ar draws yr A55 ar brynhawn Sadwrn i'w gweld yn chwarae, ond mae'r wythnos arall yn rhydd i chi fynd i weld eich clwb lleol.

I have no objection to carrying out further research into summer football. People, naturally, have their own favourite clubs, but what I would like to see, and what has been suggested, is that it would be nice if they could also adopt a local club. Clubs usually play at home every other week. If you are a season ticket holder with Manchester United or Liverpool, for example, you travel along the A55 on a Saturday afternoon to see them play, but you have the other week free to go to see your local club play.

[26] Mae angen codi ymwybyddiaeth o Uwch-gynghrair Cymru a chymryd ychydig mwy o falchder ohono fel ei fod yn rhywbeth y gallwn ymfalchïo ynddo yn hytrach nag edrych dros y ffin drwy'r amser. Mae clybiau yn gwneud gwaith arbennig. Y broblem gyda nifer o'r clybiau yw nad oes ganddynt y *core base* o gefnogwyr. Rydym wedi colli un clwb o Uwch-gynghrair Cymru am resymau ariannol yn fwy na dim, sef y Rhyl, a oedd â dilyniant brwd. Mae'n bechod nad ydynt yn dal i fod yn yr uwch-gynghrair. Rydym yn awr yn colli Castell-nedd. Mae angen inni

We need to raise awareness of the Welsh Premier League and take a little more pride in the league so that it is something that we can be proud of rather than constantly looking across the border. Clubs are doing some excellent work. The problem with many of the clubs is that they do not have a core base of supporters. We have lost one club from the Welsh Premier League for financial reasons more than anything, which is Rhyl, which had an enthusiastic fan base. It is a shame that they are not still in the Welsh Premier League. We are now losing Neath. We need

godi ymwybyddiaeth o Uwch-gynghrair Cymru a'i marchnata yn well. Nid yw pobl sy'n symud i ardaloedd newydd yn ymwybodol bod clwb pêl-droed ar stepen eu drws. Mae angen iddynt wybod sut i ddod o hyd i wybodaeth megis pryd mae'r clwb yn chwarae, yn erbyn pwy a beth yw'r gynghrair. Nid yw pobl yn ddigon ymwybodol o'r hyn sydd ganddynt ar stepen eu drws.

to raise awareness of the Welsh Premier League and market it more effectively. People who move into new areas are not aware that there is a football club on their doorstep. They need to know how to find information such as when the matches are being played, against whom and what the league structure is. People do not have sufficient awareness of what is available on their doorstep.

[27] **Mr Williams:** Nid mater yn unig o bryd maent yn chwarae yw hyn; mae'n broblem ehangach, mewn ffordd. Mae llawer o'r tystion yn cyffwrdd â'r pwyntiau hynny yn eu hymateb.

Mr Williams: It is not just an issue of when they play; it is a broader problem, in a way. Many of the witnesses touched on those points in their responses.

[28] **Ann Jones:** We have not gone through this without mentioning a certain football club, but I declared the interest at the start. We will move on to the next section, which is the coverage of the Welsh Premier League in the media and attendance at matches.

[29] **Kenneth Skates:** In your evidence, you gave some detail regarding how coverage of the Welsh Premier League has developed. Can you outline how you measure the impact of your coverage on the league? Are you able to compare, for example, coverage to match attendances? Are there any correlations that would indicate that improved coverage has led to football clubs being more sure footed and having greater attendances? Are there any sorts of measures at all?

[30] **Mr Davies:** Nac oes, nid i mi fod yn ymwybodol ohonynt.

Mr Davies: No, not that I am aware of.

[31] **Kenneth Skates:** Do you have any plans to put in place any measures?

[32] **Mr Williams:** Y prif fesuriadau y byddem yn edrych arnynt yw'r niferoedd gwyllo. Mae'r niferoedd sy'n dod drwy'r gataiau bob dydd Sadwrn o ddi-ddordeb mawr i ni. Rydym ni, fel y cwmni cynhyrchu sy'n darlledu'r gemau hyn, yn awyddus i wneud pob peth a allwn i gynyddu'r niferoedd hynny ac i weithio gyda'r clybiau a'r gymdeithas ar gynyddu'r niferoedd hynny. Mae arallgyfeirio sylw at y darllediad yn dod yn fwy o beth i ni wrth i ni symud ymlaen. Roeddwn yn falch iawn o weld, er enghraifft, ar ddiwedd gêm Uwch-gynghrair y Principality yn Heol Sardis y nos Wener ond un bod hysbyseb i hyrwyddo darllediad *Sgorio* y dydd Sadwrn canlynol yn rhan o'r darllediad hwnnw neu fod camerau Tinopolis yn dod i wneud eitem y tu ôl i'r llenni ar y gwasanaeth ac ar y gyfres. Mae pob peth felly yn rhan o ymgyrch hyrwyddo i'r gyfres. Felly, mae angen rhoi mesuriadau ar waith i weld sut maent yn effeithio ar niferoedd y

Mr Williams: The main measures that we would look at are the viewing figures. The numbers that come through the gates every Saturday are of great interest to us. We, as the production company that broadcasts these games, want to do everything that we can to increase those numbers and to work with the clubs and the association on increasing those numbers. Redirecting attention to the coverage is becoming a greater thing for us as we move forward. I was pleased to see, for example, at the end of the Principality Premiership game at Sardis Road on the Friday before last that there was an advertisement to promote a broadcast of *Sgorio* on the following Saturday as part of that broadcast or that Tinopolis cameras were coming to make a behind-the-scenes item on the service and on the league. Everything, therefore, is part of the promotional campaign for the series. Therefore, measurements need to be put in place to see

gwylwyr.

[33] Peth arall yr oeddwn yn falch o'i weld yn nhystiolaeth S4C yw ein bod bellach yn meddwl am sefyllfa darlledwyr. Yn hytrach na'u bod yn bidio yn erbyn ei gilydd am hawliau'n gyson, maent yn edrych ar ffyrdd o fanteisio ar y cyd ar ddefnydd o'r gemau, clipiau a dadansoddi ac rydym bellach yn gallu rhoi rhai munudau i raglen chwaraeon BBC nos Wener o dan y cytundeb newydd fel eu bod nhw hefyd yn rhoi sylw i'r gynghrair. Y broblem sy'n bodoli yw, os ydym yn edrych ar ddarllediad, a honno'n ecsgliwsif i'r darlledwr sy'n rhoi sylw iddi, mae eisiau inni ffeindio ffordd o godi cynnwrf a diddordeb ymysg y darlledwyr ac yn y wasg yn gyffredinol, yn hytrach na meddwl mai jobyn S4C yn unig yw hyrwyddo darlledu'r uwch-gynghrair—os yw hynny yn rhyw fath o ateb i'ch cwestiwn.

[34] **Kenneth Skates:** Going off track a little, would local tv potentially have benefits for you?

[35] **Mr Williams:** Rydym yn edrych ar y berthynas gyda'r clybiau o ran eu potensial hwy i we-ddarlledu ac rydym wedi gwe-ddarlledu Airbus yn erbyn Aberystwyth yn fyw. Felly, mae posibiliadau fel hynny rydym wedi edrych arnynt. Mae mwy a mwy o gynnwys yn ymddangos ar wefan *Sgorio* ac mae traffig cynyddol yn dod iddi. Efallai y gallai ein hadran rhyngweithio adrodd yn ôl gydag ystadegau ar ddefnydd o bethau fel hynny pe bai hynny o ddefnydd i'r pwyllgor.

[36] **Kenneth Skates:** What are the major challenges that you have faced over the past four years in covering the Welsh Premier League and what more could be done to address those challenges?

[37] **Mr Davies:** Yr adnoddau yn y caeau yw'r sialens. Maent yn amrywiol iawn. Mae pob un cae yn unigryw ac yn dod â'i broblemau ei hun. Mae problem cynllunio wedi bod gydag ambell i glwb. Mae'r ffordd y mae'r eisteddleoedd ac yn y blaen wedi eu gosod yn wreiddiol yn creu problemau inni o ran *sight lines*, corneli ac yn y blaen. Rydym wedi ceisio, hyd gorau ein gallu, i oresgyn y problemau hynny, ond mae lle i wella eto o ran y *gantries* a manau priodol i roi'r camerâu eraill.

how they impact on the numbers of viewers.

Another thing that I was pleased to see in S4C's evidence was that we now think about the broadcasters' situation. Rather than regularly bidding against each other for rights, they are now looking at the benefits of collaborative work on the use of the games, clips and analysis and that we can now give a few minutes to the BBC's Friday night sports programme under the new agreement so that they also give some attention to the league. The problem that exists is that, if we look at a broadcast that is exclusive to the broadcaster that gives attention to it, we need to find a way of creating excitement and interest among broadcasters and the press in general, rather than thinking that it is just S4C's job to promote the broadcasting of the premier league—if that is some kind of answer to your question.

Mr Williams: We are looking at the relationship with the clubs in terms of their potential to webcast and we have done a live webcast of Airbus versus Aberystwyth. So, there are possibilities like that that we have looked at. More and more content is appearing on the *Sgorio* website and increasing traffic is coming to that website. Perhaps our interactive department could report back with statistics on the use of such things if that would be useful for the committee.

Mr Davies: The facilities at the grounds are the challenge. They vary a great deal. Every ground is unique and brings its own problems. There have been planning problems with certain clubs. The way that the stands and so on were originally set up creates problems for us in terms of sight lines, the corners and so on. We have tried, to the best of our ability, to overcome those problems, but there is still room for improvement in terms of the gantries and appropriate spots to place the other cameras.

[38] Un peth sydd yn ymddangos yn y drwydded sydd yn ddiangen ar y funud yw'r gofyn am stiwdio deledu. Yn y ffordd rydym yn darlledu ar y funud, nid ydym yn defnyddio stiwdio deledu, felly, hyd y gwelaf, mae'n gost ddiangen i'r clybiau. Byddai'n well gennym pe baent yn neilltuo ardal gyflwyno yn hytrach na stiwdio. Rwy'n gwybod bod nifer o'r clybiau yn defnyddio'r stiwdios ar gyfer lletygarwch a noddwyr, felly maent yn defnyddio'r ystafell, ond i glybiau sy'n ystyried eu cael yn y dyfodol, bydd yn wastraff amser achos nid oes galw gennym amdanynt ar y funud.

One thing that is included in the licence that is unnecessary at present is the requirement for a television studio. The way that we broadcast at the moment, we do not use a television studio, so, as far as I can see, it is an unnecessary cost for the clubs. We would prefer it if they were to allocate a presenting area rather than a studio. I know that a number of the clubs use the studios as hospitality suites and for their sponsors, so they make use of the room, but the clubs that are considering getting them in the future will be wasting their time because we do not require their use at present.

[39] Rwy'n meddwl byddai cot o baent mewn ambell le yn ddefnyddiol. Y gwir amdani yw bod y camera yn gweld pob dim. Mae diffyg lleoedd storio gan ambell glwb. Roedd enghraifft ychydig o wythnosau yn ôl lle'r oedd goliau ar hyd y cae, felly roedd dwy gôl y naill ben a'r llall, ond wrth i'r bêl fynd draw, roeddech yn gweld gôl dros yr ystlys. Nid oedd yn edrych yn dda. Gallai fod yn gamarweiniol hefyd o ran onglau gwahanol—os ydych yn gweld y bêl yn dod o un cyfeiriad ond bod y gôl y ffordd arall, byddech yn meddwl, 'Hold on, dim ond dwy gôl sydd i fod.' Mae mesurau eithaf rhesymol a rhad y gellid eu cymryd er mwyn gwella'r diwyg, nid ar gyfer y teledu yn unig, ond ar gyfer profiad y bobl sydd yn mynd i wylïo'r gemau.

I think that a coat of paint in certain grounds would be useful. The truth is that the camera picks up everything. There is a lack of storage facilities in certain clubs. There was an example a couple of weeks ago where there were goals at pitch side, so there were two goals at either end, but as the ball crossed the touchline, you could see a goal across the touchline. It did not look good. It could also be misleading in terms of different angles—if you saw the ball moving in one direction, but the goal was in the other direction, you would think, 'Hold on, there are only supposed to be two goals.' Relatively reasonable and cheap measures could be taken in order to improve the look, not only for the television, but for the experience of the people who go to watch the matches.

[40] **Kenneth Skates:** You may be aware of Carmarthen Town's comments:

[41] 'It is a shame that there is no financial value for the Premier League clubs in relation to the use of their resources for broadcasting live games'.

[42] What are your comments in response to that?

[43] **Mr Davies:** Cefais fy syfrdanu pan ddes i'n ymwybodol o hynny yn gyntaf. Fy nealltwriaeth i yw, ar gyfer y cytundeb newydd, y bydd hynny'n newid. Wrth gwrs, mae'n hollol hurt nad yw'r clybiau yn cael unrhyw fath o gydnabyddiaeth bod darllediadau yn dod o'u caeau. Yn bersonol, credaf y dylent ei chael.

Mr Davies: I was astounded when I first became aware of that. My understanding is that, with the new contract, that will change. Of course, it is crazy that the clubs receive no recognition that broadcasts are coming from their grounds. Personally, I believe that they should.

[44] **Mr Williams:** Nid oes dwywaith am hynny. Mae ymateb S4C yn nodi hynny fel rhan o'r trefniant newydd gyda'r gymdeithas bêl-droed.

Mr Williams: There is no doubt about that. S4C's response notes that as part of the new agreement with the football association.

[45] **Kenneth Skates:** May I ask one more question, please? The success of the English league is owed in part to the celebritisation and glamour of football and mass audience participation. Are you able to improve the glamour of the Welsh league?

[46] **Mr Williams:** Malcolm Allen yw un o'n cyflwynwyr. Beth fwy gallwn ei wneud, dywedwch? [*Chwerthin.*]

Mr Williams: Malcolm Allen is one of our presenters. What more do you think we can do? [*Laughter.*]

[47] **Ann Jones:** And John Hartson.

[48] **Mr Davies:** Rwy'n credu bod arwyr o fewn Uwch-gynghrair Cymru. Mae Les Davies ym Mangor—neu Big Les, fel y'i gelwir, neu *the Truck*—ac eleni, sgoriodd Greg Draper y gôl a aeth â Seland Newydd i'r Gemau Olympaidd. Mae cymeriadau i'w cael, ac mae lle i ni eu codi'n fwy o sêr fyth. Rydym yn gobeithio ein bod eisoes yn gwneud hynny i ryw raddau, ond nid da lle gellir gwell. Mae cymeriadau lliwgar iawn i'w cael yn y gynghrair, ond rwy'n derbyn y pwynt, a gobeithio ein bod yn gwneud ein rhan, er efallai y gallem wneud mwy.

Mr Davies: I think that there are heroes in the Welsh Premier League. There is Les Davies at Bangor—or Big Les, as he is known, or the Truck—and this year, Greg Draper scored the goal that took New Zealand to the Olympic Games. There are personalities, and we have a role in making them even bigger stars. We hope that we are already doing that to an extent, but there is always room for improvement. There are some colourful characters in the league, but I accept the point and I hope that we are playing our part, although perhaps we could do more.

[49] **Mr Williams:** Mae'r wasg yn gyfrwng cryf o ran rhoi proffil i unigolion mewn clybiau. Efallai nad ydym yn gweld digon o hynny yng Nghymru, sef unigolion yn cael sylw yn y wasg genedlaethol.

Mr Williams: The press is a powerful medium for raising the profile of individuals at club level. Perhaps we do not see enough of that happening in Wales, of individuals getting coverage in the national press.

[50] **Mr Davies:** Efallai ei bod yn rhwydd lladd ar gorfforaethau neu aelodau eraill o'r cyfryngau a'r wasg, ond mae tipyn o le i wella o ran gweisg a'n sianeli eraill yng Nghymru i godi hygredd Uwch-gynghrair Cymru. Ein cynghrair ni yw hi wedi'r cyfan. Roedd penawdau'n sôn am dair rownd derfynol chwaraeon pwysig dydd Sadwrn diwethaf, a dim sôn am rownd derfynol y gemau ail gyfle am le yn Ewrop. Roedd y tair gêm yn ymwneud â chlybiau nad oeddent yn ymwneud â Chymru o gwbl o ran rygbi a phêl-droed. Os yw hynny'n dderbyniol, wel, felly y mae, ond yn bersonol, nid wyf yn credu y dylai fod yn dderbyniol.

Mr Davies: It may be easy to criticise corporations or other members of the media and the press, but other press titles and channels in Wales have quite a way to go with regard to raising the Welsh Premier League's credibility. It is our league, after all. There were headlines covering three important sports finals played last Saturday, but no mention was made of the European qualification play-offs in Wales. The three games concerned involved clubs that have nothing to do with Wales at all, in rugby and football. If that is acceptable, well, so be it, but I do not personally think that it should be acceptable.

[51] Nid yw'n ddadl ychwaith dweud nad oes gennym yr hawliau, gan nad yw hyn yn ddim byd i'w wneud â hawliau. Nid oedd gan y cwmni arbennig hwn yr hawliau i ddwy o'r gemau, ond rhoddodd benawdau iddynt beth bynnag. Nid yw'r ddadl honno'n dal dŵr, yn fy marn i.

It cannot be submitted either that this has anything to do with our not having the broadcasting rights, because this has nothing to do with rights. The particular company concerned did not have the rights to two of the matches but headlined them anyway. That argument does not hold water, in my opinion.

[52] **Mr Williams:** Mae wedi bod yn braf iawn gweld datblygu ffordd o ddarlledu'r gêm yn fyw ar ddydd Sadwrn heb fod yr uwch-gynghrair yn cael ei gosod o'r neilltu i'r rhaglen uchafbwyntiau ar y nos Lun. Gallwch weld John Hartson a Malcolm Allen ar y wefan yn trafod gêm Aberystwyth ochr yn ochr â Real Madrid. Mae John a Malcolm yn sicr yn llysgenhadon effeithiol iawn o ran y darlledu, gyda'r gemau a'r clybiau hynny'n cael eu trafod ochr yn ochr â chynghreiriau eraill, hyd yn oed y tu hwnt i Uwch-gynghrair Lloegr, fel y soniwyd. Mae hwnnw'n beth iach.

Mr Williams: It has been great to see the development of a way to broadcast the game live on Saturday without the premier league being pushed aside into the highlights programme on the Monday night. You can see John Hartson and Malcolm Allen on the website discussing the Aberystwyth match alongside Real Madrid. John and Malcolm certainly are effective ambassadors with regard to the broadcasting, with those matches and clubs being discussed alongside other leagues, even beyond the Barclays Premier League, as was mentioned. That is very healthy.

[53] **Mr Davies:** Waeth imi fod yn gwbl onest a dweud nad oedd neb yn fwy o sgeptig na fi o ran rhoi y Primera División—La Liga Sbaen—ac Uwch-gynghrair Cymru yn yr un rhaglen, ond rhaid dweud eu bod wedi eistedd ochr yn ochr â'i gilydd yn gyffyrddus iawn.

Mr Davies: I may as well be completely honest and say that there was no greater sceptic than I about screening the Primera División—Spain's La Liga—and the Welsh Premier League in the same programme, but I have to say that they sit together very comfortably.

[54] **Ann Jones:** You mentioned characters. I have called Big Les something other than Big Les before now, but we shall move on. I will not declare anything else on the matter. *[Laughter.]*

[55] **Gwyn R. Price:** You have touched on this matter, but several witnesses have been critical of the coverage of the WPL by the BBC, ITV Wales and certain newspapers. Is there anything that Rondo and S4C, or the FAW, could do in partnership with them to make it more interesting for the public?

[56] **Mr Davies:** Oes, siŵr o fod, ond efallai mai cwestiwn iddynt hwy yw hwnnw yn hytrach na chwestiwn i ni. Rwyf wedi dweud fy nheimpladau i am y pwnc, ac mae tipyn yn fwy y gellid ei wneud i wella'r sefyllfa.

Mr Davies: Yes, more than likely, but that is perhaps more a question for them than it is for us. I have made my feelings on the matter known, and there is plenty more that could be done to improve the situation.

[57] **Mr Williams:** Gan fynd yn ôl at fy mhwynt cynharach, gwelaf newid ym mherthynas y darlledwyr â'i gilydd, yn sicr rhwng S4C a'r BBC, a byddant o bosibl yn fwy parod i hyrwyddo cynrychiadau ei gilydd ar wasanaethau gwahanol. Yn y gorffennol, roeddent yn cystadlu yn uniongyrchol â'i gilydd am hawliau, ac os nad oedd darlledwr yn ennill yr hawliau, efallai y byddai'n dueddol o ddweud nad oedd am roi sylw i hynny. Fel y soniodd Emyr, mae'r sefyllfa yn awr yn wahanol ac mae'r cytundeb newydd yn adlewyrchu'r ffaith mai cynnyrch ydyw, mewn gwirionedd. Mae darlledwr yn cael yr hawliau i ddarlledu gêm, ond mae'r cynnyrch yn bodoli, ac mae modd darparu

Mr Williams: To return to my earlier point, I see a change in broadcasters' relationship with each other, certainly between S4C and the BBC, to the extent that they will possibly be more willing to promote each other's productions on various services. In the past, they were competing directly with each other for these rights, and if a broadcaster did not secure the rights, perhaps it would tend to say that it did not want to give any coverage to that event. As Emyr mentioned, the situation is different now and the new agreement reflects the fact that, in a way, it is more of a product. A broadcaster has the rights to broadcast a game, but the product exists, and highlights of the product can be distributed to

uchafbwyntiau o'r cynnyrch i ddarledwyr eraill ac i raglenni newyddion. Dyna beth sydd wedi bod ar goll: y momentwm i barhau i roi sylw i'r uwch-gynghrair rhwng gemau yn ystod y tymor, y tu hwnt i'r tymor ac wrth i'r tymor ddechrau.

other broadcasters and news programmes. That is what has been missing: the momentum to continue to give the premier league coverage between games during the season, beyond the season and as the season starts.

10.00 a.m.

[58] Rydym yn gweld mwy a mwy o sylwadau ar ein gwefannau cymdeithasol yn ystod gemau, sy'n gyd-ddarllediad o ryw fath. Mae gennym flogiwr yn gweithio i ni sy'n trydaru. Mae wedi cael tua 26,000 o negeseuon am hyn. Mae gan Dylan Ebenezer 2,000 o ddilynwyr ar Twitter. Mae'r rhain i gyd yn gweld y sylwadau cyson am y gemau ac mae hynny'n codi proffil. O bosibl, mae gan y clybiau awydd i fod yn fwy o ran o hyn gan nad ydynt wedi buddsoddi cymaint yn adeiladwaith gwefannau rhyngweithio cymdeithasol a gwefannau clwb. Rydym ni, fel cwmni darlledu, yn gallu helpu i'w gwro i gyfeiriad gwasanaethau a rhoi tipiau iddynt. Mae dadlau, ymateb a dadansoddi yn digwydd ar y wefan trydar, Twitter, yn ystod y gêm, yn hytrach na bod pobl yn gorfod dibynnu ar bapurau newydd a sylwebwyr newyddion yn syth ar ôl y gêm. Rydym yn eu gweld wrthi yn gyson.

We are seeing more and more comments on our social networking sites during games, which is a joint-broadcast of some sort. We have a blogger working for us who also tweets. He has had some 26,000 messages about this. Dylan Ebenezer has 2,000 followers on Twitter. They all see the frequent remarks about the games and that raises their profile. Possibly, the clubs are keen to be more involved in this because they have not invested as much in infrastructures such as social networking sites and club websites. We, as a broadcasting company, can help to direct them towards services and give them tips. There is debate, responses and analysis being tweeted on Twitter during the match, rather than people having to rely on newspapers and news commentators immediately after the game. We see them constantly at work now.

[59] **Mr Davies:** Y realiti yw ein bod yn cael mwy o geisiadau gan Sky na chan ddarledwyr yng Nghymru. Mae Sky fel pe bai'n cymryd mwy o ddiddordeb yn Uwch-gynghrair Cymru na'r Cymry eu hunain. Ni wn beth yw'r ateb i hynny, ond mae'n drist.

Mr Davies: The reality is we get more requests from Sky than from broadcasters in Wales. Sky seems to take more of an interest in the Welsh Premier League than the Welsh themselves. I do not know the answer to that, but it is sad.

[60] **Mike Hedges:** I am familiar with the four clubs in south Wales and they have substantially improved since their days in the Welsh league. I have two questions. First, what relatively cheap improvements could be done to improve the quality of grounds? Secondly, apart from Neath, I know of no other football ground that is shared with a rugby club, although Swansea City is quite happy to share with the Ospreys. Llanelli has an excellent new rugby ground, but football is still played at Stebonheath. Do you see any advantages to ground sharing?

[61] **Mr Davies:** A minnau'n cefnogi tîm pêl-droed Abertawe, gallaf weld ei fod yn gweithio'n effeithiol, ond mae cae arbennig iawn yn Abertawe. Maent yn chwarae arno byth a beunydd ac nid yw'n gwaethygu o gwbl. Soniasoch am Lanelli, a gwnaed buddsoddiad mawr yn y cae y tymor diwethaf, ac mae 15 gêm rownd derfynol wedi cael eu chwarae ar y cae yn ystod y

Mr Davies: As a supporter of Swansea football club, I can see that that arrangement works well, but there is an excellent pitch in Swansea. They play on it all the time and yet it does not ever seem to deteriorate at all. You mentioned Llanelli, and there was a major investment in the pitch last season, with 15 final matches being played on the pitch over the past fortnight. We must

pythefnos diwethaf. Rhaid canmol y tirmon yn fawr iawn, gan nad oedd i'w weld yn ddim gwaeth ddydd Sadwrn. Mae safon y cae yn hollbwysig i'r cynnyrch. Os yw'n gynaliadwy, ni welaf wrthwynebiad. Mae rygbi, pêl-droed Americanaidd, pêl-droed merched a phêl-droed yn cael ei chwarae ar gae y Gnoll yng Nghastell-nedd.

congratulate the groundsman on that because it did not seem any the worse for wear on Saturday. The quality of the pitch is crucial to the product. If it is sustainable, I see no objection. Rugby, American football, women's football and football are all played on the pitch at the Gnoll in Neath.

[62] Mae sôn hefyd am gaeau trydedd a phedwaredd cenedlaeth. *The jury's out* o ran y rheini. Fel adnodd i'r gymuned, maent yn bwysig iawn, ac nid oes dwywaith bod eu hirhoedledd o ran faint y gellir chwarae ar y caeau hynny dipyn yn fwy na glaswellt cyffredin. Efallai fy mod yn draddodiadol iawn, ond rwy'n hoffi gweld gem o bêl-droed yn cael ei chwarae ar wair—ond barn bersonol yw honno.

There is also talk of third generation and fourth generation pitches. The jury's still out on those. As a community resource, they are very important, and there is no two ways about it that the longevity or the amount that can be played on those pitches is much more than with the usual grass surface. I may be very traditional, but I like to see a game of football played on grass—but that is my personal opinion.

[63] Mae eisiau gwella safon y caeau yn gyffredinol. Mae Llanelli yn enghraifft arbennig achos mae'r gwahaniaeth rhwng cae y tymor hwn a chae y tymor diwethaf yn syfrdanol. Rhaid imi ganmol pob tirmon, gan eu bod yn gweithio'n eithriadol o galed. Fodd bynnag, nid yw safon ambell gae yn yr uwch-gynghrair yn ddigon da. Nid yw safon y chwarae ondystal â'r caeau, weithiau. Nid wyf am enwi'r clwb, ond mae'n drueni mawr bod gan un o'r clybiau sydd dan sylw un o'r timau pêl-droed gorau ond mae'r cae yn rhwystro'r chwaraewyr rhag chwarae ar eu gorau. Maent yn chwarae'n well oddi cartref nag ydynt gartref.

There needs to be a general improvement in the standard of the pitches. Llanelli is an excellent example because the difference between the pitch this season and the pitch last season is staggering. I must commend all groundsman, because they work extremely hard. However, the standard of some pitches in the premier league is not good enough. The standard of play is only as good as the state of the pitch allows, sometimes. I will not name the club, but it is a great shame that one of the clubs in question has one of the best football teams but the pitch prevents the players from playing at their best. They play better away than they do at home.

[64] **Mark Isherwood:** In earlier exchanges, you have referred to infrastructure. Who should be responsible for taking the lead and encouraging clubs to deliver the improved services and infrastructure that you have identified?

[65] **Mr Davies:** Mae wastad yn dda i siarad, ac efallai mai'r gwendid mwyaf i rywun sy'n edrych i mewn o'r tu fas yw'r diffyg cyfathrebu. Fodd bynnag, credaf fod pethau yn gwella. Mae ambell glwb yn gweld eu hunain yn endidau annibynnol yn hytrach na'n rhan o gynghrair. Mae rhai â'r canfyddiad bod Cymdeithas Pêl-droed Cymru yn llawn pobl mewn siwtiau yn hytrach na phobl go iawn. Mae rhyw elfen o 'ni a nhw' ac mae rhai yn gofyn, 'Pwy ydyn nhw i ddweud wrthym beth y dylen ni ei wneud?'—ychydig bach, efallai, fel y mae rhai yn gweld Llywodraeth Cymru. Mae'r elfen honno yn bodoli.

Mr Davies: It is always good to talk, and perhaps someone looking in from the outside would say that the biggest weakness is the lack of communication. However, I think that things are getting better. Some clubs see themselves as independent entities rather than as part of a league. Some have a perception of the Football Association of Wales as being full of people in suits rather than real people. There is an element of 'them and us' and some people ask, 'Who are they to tell us what we should do?'—perhaps a little bit as some see the Welsh Government. That element is definitely there.

[66] Pwy ddylai ddweud wrth bwy sut i wella? Mae hwnnw'n ddadleuol. Byddai'n braf gweld hynny'n datblygu'n organig yn y clybiau, fel eu bod yn gweld bod ganddynt le i wella ond bod angen help arnynt. Mae'r rhan fwyaf o'r clybiau yn llwyr ddibynnol ar wirfoddolwyr, sy'n gweithio yn eithriadol o galed. Fel rheol, criw bach iawn ohonynt sydd. Mae angen help arnynt, ond o ble y daw'r help hwnnw? Fel rheol, help ariannol sydd ei angen, ac mae hynny'n dod, fel arfer, o Gymdeithas Pêl-droed Cymru ond, os nad oes arian gan y gymdeithas, o ble y daw'r arian? Mae'n gynnyrch cenedlaethol, felly ni fyddai'n afresymol pe bai rywfaent o'r arian yn dod oddi wrthynt chi—y Cynulliad.

Who should tell who how to improve? That is controversial. It would be nice to see that developing organically in the clubs, so that they can see that they have room to improve but also that they need help to do so. Most of the clubs are totally dependent on volunteers, who work extremely hard. As a rule, they are a very small group. They need help but where does that help come from? Normally, it is financial help that is needed and that comes, usually, from the Football Association of Wales, but if the association has no money, where does the money come from then? It is a national product, so it would not be unreasonable for some of the money to come from you—the Assembly.

[67] **Bethan Jenkins:** Byddai'n rhaid inni amcangyfrif cost hynny cyn gwneud unrhyw argymhellion.

Bethan Jenkins: We would have to estimate the cost of that before making any recommendations.

[68] **Ann Jones:** We will not go there. We will move on

[69] **Mark Isherwood:** Obviously, we are not the Welsh Government, so we have no money. All we can do is to recommend to the Welsh Government what it might do. Realistically, what role, if any, is there for commercial sponsorship for WPL clubs, or, in this climate, is that too big a mountain to climb?

[70] **Mr Davies:** Wel, nid dyma'r adeg orau i fynd i chwilio am noddwyr. Mae'r ffaith bod Uwch-gynghrair Cymru yn cael cymaint o sylw gennym ni, neu S4C, yn helpu rhywun i fynd at noddwyr a dweud 'Edrychwch, mae'r cynnyrch hwn i'w weld gan 37,000 o bobl bob prynhawn Sadwrn'. Rwy'n siŵr bod y cyfryngau yn help yn hynny o beth. Dylai pobl fod yn cnocio drysau i ddod o hyd i noddwyr. Ni wn a oes gan gwmnïau arian sbâr i'w roi, ond os nad ydym yn codi ymwybyddiaeth gyffredinol yn ein gwlad ein hunain o'n huwch-gynghrair ni ein hunain, ni fydd yn digwydd beth bynnag.

Mr Davies: Well, this is not the best time to go looking for sponsors. The fact that the Welsh Premier League receives so much coverage from us, or from S4C, will help someone to approach sponsors and say, 'Look, this product can be seen by 37,000 viewers every Saturday afternoon'. I am sure that the media help in that regard. People should be knocking on doors trying to find sponsors. I do not know whether companies have money to spare, but if we do not raise the general awareness in our own country of our own premier league, it will not happen anyway.

[71] **Mr Williams:** Rwy'n siŵr y byddai'r clybiau yn croesawu unrhyw gyngor a chymorth o ran sut i sicrhau cefnogaeth noddwyr lleol i'w clybiau. Credaf fod gan y gymdeithas rôl amlwg i'w chwarae yn hynny. Fodd bynnag, mae darlledwyr yng Nghymru hefyd yn dod yn fwy ymwybodol o bwysau cael arian masnachol i fynd tuag at gynrychiadau. Credaf fod S4C hefyd wedi nodi'r pwynt hwnnw yn ei dystiolaeth: mae'n cydnabod potensial hynny o ran codi proffil a

Mr Williams: I am sure that clubs would welcome any advice and assistance on how to secure the support of local sponsors for their clubs. I believe that the association has an obvious role to play in that. However, broadcasters in Wales are also becoming more aware of the pressure to secure commercial funding to go towards productions. I believe that S4C has also noted that point in its evidence: it recognises the potential of that in raising the profile and

safon y clybiau a chodi safon eu caeau a'u hadnoddau.

standard of clubs and raising the quality of their pitches and resources.

[72] **Mr Davies:** Mae'r gymdeithas neu'r gynghrair wedi trefnu sesiynau marchanta gyda chwmni allanol i fynd o amgylch y clybiau. Nid wyf yn gwybod pa mor llwyddiannus fu hynny.

Mr Davies: The association or the league has arranged marketing sessions with an external company to go round the clubs. I do not know how successful that has been.

[73] **Mark Isherwood:** What more could be done to address what you describe as a lack of general ambition in lower league clubs to improve infrastructure and get their licences for the Welsh Premier League?

[74] **Mr Davies:** Eto, efallai mai cwestiwn i'r clybiau llai yw hwnnw. Pam mae diffyg dyhead i fod y gorau? Rwy'n gobeithio nad yw'n glefyd Cymreig. Dychmygwch eich bod wedi chwarae drwy'r tymor, wedi gorffen ar frig eich cynghrair, chi sy'n haeddu mynd i fyny i'r gynghrair uwch, ond nid ydych yn cael mynd. Ni allaf feddwl am unrhyw beth mwy torcalonnu fel athletwr neu chwaraewr, sef eich bod yn cael eich rhwystro rhag gwireddu eich potensial chi fel unigolyn, potensial y clwb a photensial yr ardal, y pentref neu'r dref, a phob dim sy'n mynd gyda hynny. Dywedwch chi wrthyf fi pam mae'r diffyg uchelgais hwnnw'n bodoli yn y clybiau. Os mai mater o arian ydyw, sef bod y drwydded ddomestig yn golygu gormod o gost i'r clybiau, dylai'r clybiau hynny wedyn fod yn gwneud cais i'r gynghrair, y gymdeithas, y Llywodraeth neu bwy bynnag, fel ein bod yn ymwybodol o'r problemau. Wedyn, o bosibl, byddai modd trwy grant neu beth bynnag, wireddu eu uchelgais. O'r hyn a welaf ar y funud, nid yw'r uchelgais hwnnw'n bodoli. Weithiau, mae esgusodion pitw yn codi—er enghraifft, nid yw'r chwaraewyr eisiau teithio mor bell.

Mr Davies: Again, this may be a question for the smaller clubs. Why is there a lack of ambition to be the best? I hope that it is not a Welsh disease. Imagine that you have played throughout the season, finished top of your league, you deserve to go up to a higher league, but you are not allowed to do so. I cannot think of anything more heartbreaking as an athlete or player than that, where you are prevented from realising your potential as an individual, the club's potential and the potential of the area, town or village, and everything that goes with that. You tell me why that lack of ambition exists within the clubs. If it is a matter of money, in that the domestic license incurs too many costs to the clubs, surely those clubs should then be making applications to the league, the association, the Government or whoever, so that we are aware of the problems. There could then, possibly, be a way, by means of a grant, perhaps, of realising their ambition. From what I see now, that ambition does not exist. Sometimes, feeble excuses are given—for example, that the players do not want to travel so far.

[75] **Ann Jones:** Do some clubs not apply for a domestic licence in a lower league or feeder league because they see clubs that should be relegated on footballing ability staying in the top league? Do you think that the FAW not relegating teams out of the Welsh Premier League has an effect?

[76] **Mr Davies:** Nid ydynt yn gallu gwneud i glybiau ddisgyn os nad oes clybiau sy'n bodloni'r meini prawf sy'n gallu esgyn. Mae gennych broblem, wedyn: os ydych yn mynnu bod dau glwb yn disgyn ac nad oes neb yn ddigon da i esgyn, ymhen ychydig flynyddoedd, efallai mai dim ond pum clwb fydd gennych ar ôl yn yr uwch-gynghrair. Mae'n broblem, ac nid wyf yn gwybod yr

Mr Davies: They cannot force clubs to be relegated if there are not clubs that meet the criteria that can take their place. You have a problem if you insist that two clubs drop down and there is no-one good enough to go up; in a few years' time there might only be five clubs left in the premier league. It is a problem, and I do not know what the answer is. In terms of the league's credibility, it is

ateb. O ran hygredd y gynghair, nid yw'n iawn nad yw'r ddau isaf yn disgyn ac nad oes dau arall yn dod I fyny i gymryd eu lle. Fel hynny mae hi i fod, ac os nad yw'n digwydd, mae'n awgrymu bod methiant yn y system, ac nid yw hynny'n adlewyrchu'n dda ar neb.

not right that the bottom two clubs are not relegated and that there are not another two clubs to take their place. That is how it is supposed to happen, and if it does not happen, it suggests that there is a failure in the system, and that does not reflect well on anyone.

[77] **Mark Isherwood:** You have described a lack of feeling in communities of going to social events. What do you feel could be done about that and by whom? Should it be you, the FAW, the clubs, or who?

[78] **Mr Davies:** Mae Gwyn Derfel, ysgrifennydd newydd Uwch-gynghair Cymru, yn teimlo'n gryf iawn am y pwynt hwn, sef y dylai'r clwb pêl-droed fod yn rhan annatod o'r gymuned. Yn hynny o beth, rwy'n credu y byddwn yn gweld yr uwch-gynghair, gyda chefnogaeth Cymdeithas Bêl-droed Cymru, yn neilltuo rhwyfaint o amser ac egni i wella'r broblem hon. Rydym yn byw mewn cyfnod eithaf anodd yng Nghymru: mae ysgolion yn cau a thafarndai yn cau bob wythnos; mae ein cymunedau yn dechrau mynd ar chwâl. Mae'n siŵr eich bod yn fwy ymwybodol na fi o bwysigrwydd neuaddau pentref ac yn y blaen.

Mr Davies: Gwyn Derfel, the new secretary of the Welsh Premier League, feels strongly about this point, in that the football club should be an integral part of the community. In that respect, I think that we will see the premier league, hopefully with the support of the FAW, allocating some time and energy to address this problem. We are living in quite difficult times in Wales: there are schools closing and there are pubs closing on a weekly basis; our communities are starting to disintegrate. You are probably more aware than I am of the importance of village halls and so on.

10.15 a.m.

[79] Mae'n beth da bod y gymuned yn gallu dod at ei gilydd o gwmpas y clwb pêl-droed, neu unrhyw glwb chwaraeon o ran gweithgareddau cymdeithasol nad ydynt o bosibl yn ymwneud â phêl-droed, a bod y clybiau yn dod yn rhan allweddol a chanolog o'n cymunedau. Gallai hynny ddatrys ambell broblem sy'n digwydd mewn cymunedau fel ag y maent ar y funud. Mae modd rydym yn cyflawni hynny yn fater arall, ond mae adnoddau nad ydynt yn cael eu defnyddio i'w llawn potensial ar y funud, sy'n adnoddau prin a gwerthfawr i gymunedau. Dylai fod gan y gymuned yr hawl i elwa ar adnoddau sydd ar gael iddi drwy gydweithrediad gyda'r clybiau. Mae nifer o'r adnoddau hyn yn perthyn i'r awdurdodau lleol beth bynnag, felly dwi'n credu bod lle i bobl ddod at ei gilydd yn fwy, ac i fod yn fwy agored o ran yr adnoddau sydd ar gael i gymunedau.

It is a good thing that communities can come together around the football club, or any sports club with regard to social activities that may have nothing to do with football, and that the clubs become a key and central part of our communities. That could solve a few problems in communities as they currently stand. How we achieve that is a different matter, but there are resources that are not being used to their full potential at present, which are scarce and valuable resources to communities. The community should have the right to take advantage of the available resources by co-operating with the clubs. Many of these resources belong to the local authorities in any case, so I think that there is opportunity for people to come together more, and to be more open about the resources that are available to communities.

[80] **Mr Williams:** Pe bai digwyddiadau'n cael eu trefnu gan glybiau o fewn y gymuned, prif waith darlledu yw'r gemau, ond rydym yn fynych yn rhoi sylw i

Mr Williams: If activities were organised by clubs within the community, the main focus of broadcasting is the games, but we frequently cover peripheral events in the

ddigwyddiadau ymylol yn y gymuned. Mewn un ffordd, byddai hynny'n atgyfnerthu'r darllediadau ac yn rhoi cynnyrch arall i ni ei roi ar ein gwefannau, sydd yn fwy o beth cymdeithasol, a bod hynny'n hybu'r diddordeb lleol yn y clybiau arbennig hynny. Rwy'n credu y byddai modd gweithio at rywbeth felly. Yn y lle cyntaf, mae'r awydd a'r hyder i'w wneud yn gorfod dod o'r clybiau, yn hytrach na bod rhywun allanol yn dweud, 'Dwi'n credu y dylech wneud hyn bob nos Fercher, a hyn bob nos Iau'. Dylai fod yn rhywbeth sy'n tyfu o galon y gymuned, ond bod cymorth a chefnogaeth iddo ddigwydd.

[81] **Mr Davies:** Mae'n rhan o'n strategaeth fel rhaglen i adlewyrchu cymuned ac ardaloedd y clybiau. Efallai nad ydym wedi gwneud hynny'n ddigonol—byddem yn syrthio ar ein bai o ran hynny—ond rydym yn sicr yn ymwybodol ohono ac yn gobeithio gwella arno, a chymryd ein bod yn cael parhau i gynhyrchu'r rhaglen yn y dyfodol.

[82] **Ann Jones:** There are just two more questions left. I know that we have run out of time, but we will take these questions.

[83] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Do you have a strategy as part of your WPL coverage to attract viewers who may feel excluded from watching football, such as black minority ethnic people, lesbian, gay and bisexual people and women?

[84] **Mr Davies:** Rydym yn darlledu gemau merched hefyd. Gwe-ddarlledwyd gêm merched Cymru yn erbyn Ffrainc yn fyw. Dyna'r tro cyntaf i ni we-ddarlledu unrhyw gêm gyflawn. Rhoddwyd sylw i uchafbwyntiau rownd derfynol cynghrair y merched bythefnos yn ôl. Rydym yn gobeithio rhoi sylw i gynghrair y merched ar ei newydd wedd y tymor nesaf; dyna yw ein bwriad. Rydym yn ymwybodol o'r holl haenau sy'n bodoli—gallem fynd drwyddynt a dweud pa gemau rydym wedi eu dangos yn ystod y tymor os ydych eisiau, neu gallech edrych ar bob categori sydd o fewn y gymdeithas bêl-droed; gwelwch ein bod wedi ticio bob un o'r bocsys rhywbryd. Mae modd gwneud mwy, ond mae'n dod i lawr i gyllideb a hefyd i faint o amser darlledu sydd ym mhob rhaglen.

[85] **Mr Williams:** Rydym yn sôn hefyd am dîm cynhyrchu sy'n gweithio yn barhaol o Gaernarfon a Chaerdydd i wasanaethu'r

community. In a way, it would reinforce the broadcasts and give us more social content on our websites, which boosts local interest in those clubs. I think that we could work towards something like that. Initially, the keenness and the confidence to do that has to come from the clubs, rather than someone from outside saying, 'I think you should do this every Wednesday night, and this every Thursday night'. It should be something that grows from the heart of the community, but that there is assistance and support for it to happen.

Mr Davies: It is part of our strategy as a programme to reflect the communities and areas of the clubs. Perhaps we do not do that enough—we would be the first to admit that—but we are certainly aware of it and hope to improve on it, assuming that we are allowed to continue producing the programme in future.

Mr Davies: We also broadcast women's matches. We had the Wales versus France women's match live as a web broadcast. That was the first time that we had broadcast a full match on the internet. We focused on the highlights of the women's league final a fortnight ago. We hope to focus on the women's league in its new form next season; that is our intention. We are aware of all the layers that exist—we could go through them and tell you which matches we show during the season if you wish, or you could look at each category within the football association and you will see that we have ticked all the boxes at one time or another. We could do more, but it comes down to budget and also how much broadcast time there is within each programme.

Mr Williams: We are also talking about a production team that works permanently from Caernarfon and Cardiff focusing on

cyffiniau. Rydym yn sôn am dîm sy'n ymrwymedig iawn fel bod elfennau o wahanol gynghreiriau a thimau yn cael sylw, yn hytrach na'u bod yn cael eu hanwybyddu, fel sy'n digwydd, yn fy marn i, yn llawer rhy aml o ran ambell gyfrwng ac ambell bapur cenedlaethol honedig sydd gennym yng Nghymru. Rydym yn gwneud ymdrech, pan ddaw rhywbeth newydd, i *Sgorio* allu dweud, 'Rydym yn mynd i wneud eitem ar hynny', yn hytrach na dweud, 'Nid ydym am wneud hynny gan nad yw'n eistedd o fewn yr hyn rydym fel arfer yn ei wneud'.

those local areas. We are talking about a highly committed production team so that different leagues and teams are given attention, rather than being ignored, which happens, in my opinion, far too often in some media and some allegedly national newspapers that we have in Wales. We do endeavour, when something new arises, for *Sgorio* to be able to say, 'We're going to do an item on that', rather than say, 'We are not doing that because it does not sit within what we usually do'.

[86] **Joyce Watson:** I am really pleased to hear that women are now being recognised in their footballing role, other than the role behind the scenes, which you never see. Having said all of that, you have talked about the fact that you are covering women's football, which is commendable I am sure, but you did not talk about what you are doing for the black minority ethnic people or the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender sector in society. It would be useful if you could unpick some of that. If you have any facts or figures to support that, we would be quite happy to receive them.

[87] **Mr Williams:** At this point, we have not got anything specific to add to that. Of course, we recognise how vitally important it is that these broadcasts truly reflect the variety of social fabric that we have in Wales. At no point would we exclude anybody on the basis of their background or race.

[88] **Mr Davies:** Mae'r gyfres *Sgorio* ar nos Lun a nos Fawrth wedi gwneud eitemau ar bob un o'r categorïau hynny. Mae cynghrair yng Nghaerdydd, ac rydym wedi gwneud eitem arni. Nid ydym am gyrraedd pwynt lle gallem ganolbwyntio ar bob cynghrair sy'n bodoli ym mhob categori, neu dim ond darllediadau pêl-droed fyddai ar S4C. Rwy'n derbyn y pwynt bod angen inni fod yn deg.

Mr Davies: *Sgorio* on Mondays and Tuesdays has done items on each of those categories. There is a league in Cardiff, which we have covered. We are not going to reach a point where we could concentrate on every league that exists in every category, or there would be nothing but football on S4C. I accept the point that we need to be fair.

[89] **Ann Jones:** We would not mind having football on S4C all the time—I would not mind it. [*Laughter.*]

[90] **Mr Williams:** Mae John a Malcolm wedi agor y drafodaeth i gynnwys pethau sy'n berthnasol i bêl-droed yn ehangach heddiw. Mae hiliaeth ac agwedd wrth-hoyw, yn anffodus, yn bethau sy'n codi yn llawer rhy aml. Gyda rhaglenni megis *Week In Week Out* neithiwr, a oedd yn dangos Liam o Bontypridd yn siarad ac yn ymateb wrth wneud y cyfweiliad, gorau po fwyaf o sylw y mae hynny'n ei gael er mwyn inni ddweud nad yw'n ymddygiad derbyniol, boed yn gyfraniad ar wefan rhwydweithio cymdeithasol neu beidio. Nid yw'n rhywbeth y byddem yn rhwystro ei gynnwys fel eitem

Mr Williams: John and Malcolm have opened the debate today to include wider issues within football. Racism and homophobia are, unfortunately, things that come up far too often. With programs such as *Week In Week Out* last night, which showed Liam from Pontypridd speaking and responding in doing the interview, the more attention that it gets, the better, so that we can say that it is not acceptable behaviour, whether it is a contribution on a social networking site or not. It is not something that we would refuse to include as an item or an issue for discussion.

neu bwnc trafodaeth.

[91] **Mr Davies:** Fel y dywedais, rydym wedi rhoi sylw iddynt, gan gynnwys yr ymgyrch Dangos y Cerdyn Coch i Hiliaeth. Aethom o amgylch rhai ysgolion yn dilyn yr ymgyrch honno. Cafwyd penwythnos penodol a oedd yn tynnu sylw pobl at y problemau sy'n codi yn sgîl hiliaeth.

Mr Davies: As I said, we have covered these issues, including the Show Racism the Red Card campaign. We went around a few schools following that campaign. There was a specific weekend that we used to highlight the problems that can arise because of racism.

[92] **Joyce Watson:** You talked about wonderful role models when you were asked earlier. However, I spotted that there was not a single mention of any female role models. I was wondering whether you have found any female role models that you could present to the viewers to encourage them to watch or play football.

[93] **Mr Davies:** Yn hanesyddol, mae *Sgorio* bob amser wedi rhoi lle blaenllaw i ferched. Roedd Rhian Williams gyda ni o'r dechrau un, bron 25 mlynedd yn ôl, yn ohebydd chwaraeon. Amanda Protheroe-Thomas oedd yr ail gyflwynydd i'r gyfres *Sgorio*. Ar hyn o bryd, mae gennym dîm o 10 sy'n gweithio ar *Sgorio*; pedair merch a chwe bachgen. Lowri—merch, wrth reswm—yw ein prif gyfarwyddwr, sef cyfarwyddwr y gemau byw. Nid ydym yn gwahaniaethu rhwng y naill ryw a'r llall. Rydym yn fwriadol yn penodi pobl ar eu gallu i wneud y gwaith.

Mr Davies: Historically, *Sgorio* has always giving a prominent role to women. Rhian Williams was there from the very outset, almost 25 years ago, as a sports correspondent. Amanda Protheroe-Thomas was the second presenter of the *Sgorio* series. We currently have a team of 10 working on *Sgorio*; four women and six men. Lowri—who is a woman, naturally—is our main director, and is the director for the live matches. We do not discriminate on grounds of gender. We deliberately appoint people on their ability to carry out the work.

[94] **Joyce Watson:** I am very pleased to hear that.

[95] **Ann Jones:** We have run over time, so I apologise, but it was important. Thank you for your evidence; it has been very good. You will get a copy of the transcript to check for accuracy. We hope that you will like the findings that we come up with; I am sure that you have helped us with that. Please continue your good work. I am one of those people who go to a football match on a Saturday afternoon, but also record the match so that I can watch it, particularly when it is my favourite team. Hopefully, you will be coming to see my favourite team in a few seasons' time.

10.25 a.m.

Ymchwiliad i Uwch-gynghrair Cymru—Sesiwn Dystiolaeth Inquiry into the Welsh Premier League—Evidence Session

[96] **Ann Jones:** We will now move on to our next session to receive evidence from the Welsh Local Government Association. The witnesses will have had a flavour of the questioning. I welcome Peter Gomer, interim policy adviser for leisure, culture, tourism and heritage at the WLGA, and David Phenis, who is a community development manager. We are in formal session, so the microphones will operate automatically. We operate bilingually and headsets are available if you need them. Channel 1 is the translation from Welsh to English and channel 0 is the floor language. Do either of you have a short opening statement?

[97] **Mr Gomer:** Apologies to the committee for not providing the detailed evidence earlier; that is down to commitments and short notice. If Members are happy, I will today try

to cover the bigger, pan-Wales picture and some of the issues around collaboration and so forth. David has come from Caerphilly to give some exemplars of good practice. We felt that it was important for the committee to see where some of the developments were going and some real hard evidence around what changes can be made by putting certain things into place.

[98] I will mention the collaboration issue—the collaboration between the Football Association of Wales and local authorities. Some of the evidence that we have seen includes exceptional transformational change around not just playing, but the league structures and the ability, particularly for young people, to participate, because they are, at the end of the day, the future of Welsh premiership football and football in Wales.

[99] **Ann Jones:** David, do you have a brief opening statement?

[100] **Mr Phenis:** No.

[101] **Ann Jones:** Are you happy to move straight to questions?

[102] **Mr Phenis:** Absolutely.

[103] **Peter Black:** Could you provide us with an outline of how local authorities currently work with the FAW, Sport Wales and others to develop football at the grass-roots level and any examples of good practice?

[104] **Mr Gomer:** In the past, the FAW used to appoint officers to work with the sports development teams, and those officers would often be funded by the FAW but work within local authorities. A couple of years ago, after a great deal of consultation and discussion, the FAW took back on board the employment of those officers, and although it manages them directly, they have a close link and synergy with the sports development units and leisure units within all local authorities. Needless to say, like anything else, the strength is in that co-operation and collaboration between individuals at local authority level. However, there is some excellent good practice. That is the on-the-ground scenario.

[105] On the relationship at a more senior level, the FAW in particular works well in meeting with chief leisure officers in Wales to discuss strategy and plans and how they can work better to develop facilities and to discuss player development and sports development and so on. There are the usual two tiers: the strategic level, namely the chief leisure officers; and the other level would be the on-the-ground sports development officers. Perhaps Dave would like to come in on the practical issues on the ground with FAW officers and sports development.

[106] **Mr Phenis:** In recent years, there has been a great deal of improvement in terms of the collaboration of all key partners. You mentioned Sport Wales and the FAW; significantly, there is also the relationship between the FAW and the Welsh Football Trust. Our contribution through local authorities to improved participation in football has been mainly through the trust.

10.30 a.m.

[107] There now seems to be a greater synergy between the direction, strategy and areas of focus of the FAW and the trust. That has been replicated in local authorities, area associations, local leagues and clubs; everybody has a contribution to make. A few years ago, that contribution and clarity on the expected role that each organisation can have were not there. As Peter suggested, it still depends on the people involved, but there are some terrific people working in the trust. There is some clarity regarding their contribution, and there is far

greater clarity on the role that local authorities can play in introducing, retaining and improving players. There is also clarity on the contribution with regard to facilities, improving coaches and support for clubs. The level that the FAW, the trust and local authorities has achieved is much higher than it has been for some time.

[108] **Peter Black:** Going back to the 21 football development posts, the FAW told us that it was receiving partnership funding from local councils that amounted to about £350,000. It suggested that that funding had then been withdrawn. I am not sure how that happened or where we are on this matter now.

[109] **Mr Gomer:** A decision was made between the FAW and local authorities. I think that there was a feeling at the time that there would be greater clarity, as Dave mentioned, on the role of the FAW in directly managing those staff rather than their being jointly employed by the authority, which would lead to confusion about who manages the role, who gives direction and so forth. Although there has been some withdrawal of local authority funding, primarily based on budget reductions in local authorities, the work on the ground has improved, not reduced. Even though the money available has decreased, the clarity of role has seen an improvement with regard to who is doing what and where, and what contribution each partner makes to that role. One would think that a reduction in funding would have a major negative impact but, in this instance, the evidence to date suggests otherwise. I cannot say that the same is true for every area in Wales, but the evidence suggests that there is a better and more positive working relationship regarding what we are trying to deliver on the ground.

[110] **Mr Phenis:** The situation is replicated in other sports. We used to have sport-specific officers for hockey, netball, football and rugby. Now, the local authority does not have sport-specific officers; it is about generic support for the development of sport. The situation is not exclusive to football.

[111] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Mae'n bosibl, fel yr ydych wedi awgrymu, fod llawer mwy o egludreb o ran sut mae rheoli'r adnoddau hynny ar lawr gwlad. Fodd bynnag, roedd Cymdeithas Bêl-droed Cymru yn gwbl glir yn ei thystiolaeth fod y buddsoddiad o ran llywodraeth leol wedi lleihau yn sylweddol dros y blynyddoedd diwethaf. Mae hynny'n wahanol iawn i'r hyn rydych yn ei awgrymu.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: It is possible, as you have suggested, that there is much more clarity regarding how resources are managed on the ground. However, the FAW was very clear in its evidence that the investment from local government has decreased substantially in recent years. That is very different from what you are suggesting.

[112] **Mr Gomer:** Do you mean with regard to investment from direct contribution to match funding or general investment in facilities and so forth?

[113] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** The evidence that the FAW gave was that the investment itself has decreased substantially.

[114] **Mr Gomer:** Local authorities have undoubtedly had to reduce budgets in some areas of development work. As you are aware, the pressures on local authorities over the last couple of years have been significant. I understand that taking money away can have a negative effect. However, some of the exemplars that we will cover later on in this meeting will show that some of the clarity that is being developed and more targeted investment in what will make a difference, as opposed to general investment in some of the work that was going on before, have made a significant difference. As the evidence unfolds this morning, I hope that we can clearly show you that you can reduce funding but, if you collaborate well together, you can also invest wisely and jointly. It is not just one partner's decision on what direction to

take; it is, rather, a mutually taken decision. As a result, there can be significant benefits. We will give that evidence during the morning.

[115] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** In its evidence, the Football Association of Wales said

[116] ‘We have requested figures from the WLGA regarding funding for football at all levels but haven’t received the relevant information as yet’.

[117] Why is that?

[118] **Mr Gomer:** We were given 24 hours’ notice of the request. Unfortunately, at the time, I was spending half of my time in a bunker dealing with the torch relay for the Olympics, so we will give that evidence, when required, to the FAW, but maybe more importantly, to this committee.

[119] **Bethan Jenkins:** Mae fy nghwestiwn i am dimau’n defnyddio adnoddau’r cyngor. Yn fy ardal i, nid yw’r tîm yn yr uwch-gynghrair, ond rwyf wedi bod yn ei helpu oherwydd ei fod yn defnyddio adnoddau’r cyngor ac, oherwydd diffyg adnoddau, mae’n ystyried chwarae y tu allan i’r sir, yn sgîl y problemau gyda’r cyngor sir dan sylw. Pa fath o broblemau yr ydych chi’n eu hwynebu gyda thimau yn sgîl y ffaith nad oes adnoddau priodol ar gael a bod gormod o arian yn mynd ar y clybiau eu hunain, yn hytrach na bod y cyngor yn ceisio helpu timau? Pa fath o drafodaethau yr ydych chi’n eu cael â thimau i geisio ymrafael â’r sefyllfa, sy’n gallu bod yn eithaf anodd weithiau?

Bethan Jenkins: My question relates to teams using council resources. In my area, the team is not in the premier league, but I have been helping it because it uses council resources and, due to a lack of resources, is considering the possibility of playing outside of the county, due to the problems with the council in question. What kind of problems do you face with teams due to a lack of appropriate resources and due to too much money going on the clubs themselves, rather than the council looking to help teams? What kind of discussions are you having with teams to get to grips with the situation, which can be quite difficult sometimes?

[120] **Mr Gomer:** That is quite a difficult question to answer without knowing specific circumstances.

[121] **Bethan Jenkins:** Yes, but generally—

[122] **Mr Gomer:** The general answer is that, on an annual basis, an average-sized local authority spends £0.5 million on just maintaining pitches and pavilions, and, obviously, times are tough. However, annually—and this is partly covered in the transient nature of some football clubs—clubs will use council pitches, and very few have a home base; it may be the local public house or someone else’s club. Particularly with lower teams aspiring to move up the leagues, the issue is that the ground conditions have to meet certain standards, and a club’s first port of call is always the local authority. The average local authority manages 125 pitches, whether they be rugby, football or whatever type of pitch. A local authority cannot suddenly invest £10,000, for example, on spectator barriers around a pitch to allow that team to apply to go up a league

[123] Often, teams will only apply half way, or three quarters of the way, through the season, when they suddenly realise that there is a prospect of promotion. At that stage, a team may have been playing on that pitch for 10, 20 or 30 years, and is less transient than others, but would not have checked with the council if there are any covenants on the pitch. So often, councils are hamstrung by covenants. This is particularly true of Valleys areas as a result of the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation set-up, where the covenants are very strict and talk of open access to playing fields. Over the years, a number of teams would have loved to

have played in a higher league and, at the time, local authorities might have been able help them, but they were prevented from doing anything that would give a public impression that the ground was becoming exclusive. So, there are lots of issues there. Local authorities cannot speculatively pay out £10,000 for barriers here and there, because of the ongoing cost, and it is possible that team A will not be promoted. Often, the rules mean that the facilities have to be in place often before they finish and know whether they will be promoted.

[124] Also, teams that think that they may have a chance of promotion suddenly reach a stage of the season where players leave the team, or plan to leave for the next season, because they will be paid more money by another club not far down the road and which might be playing at a lower level. So, there is a financial imperative that comes into play with individual players.

[125] I have seen teams that aspire to the league just below the Welsh Premier League, having been there for one season and then do not exist the following season, even though the local authority has done everything it could to help that team with advice and guidance. The local authority could not give funding, but it gave advice and guidance. The FAW would have talked to Sport Wales, which would have told it to do this and that. However, at the end of the day, it came down to the team, which, having almost imploded, did not get promotion. One or two of the players who felt that they should be playing at a higher level, or for more money, left. This is a constant dilemma for local authorities. So, there is a whole range of issues, and I presume, in the case that you mentioned, that the local authority would have explained and met the team management and committee and explained to them all of those underlying issues. If the team went outside, I would be surprised if it found that things were different. One thing that we wanted to talk about this morning is that some of the things that are beginning to happen will unpick some of those issues around individual teams and their problems by developing hubs of excellence, provided that teams are prepared to play there, and provided that the league management structure allows them to do it.

[126] **Bethan Jenkins:** Rwy'n cydnabod yr hyn rydych yn ei ddweud, ond, yn fy mhrofiad i—ac rwy'n defnyddio fy mhrofiad i fel esiampl, nid fel rhywbeth i chi wneud sylwad arno—ymateb a geir gan y cyngor, yn hytrach nac ymddygiad *proactive* o osod canllawiau yn eu lle i atal y problemau hyn. Felly, os oes esiamplau o ymarfer da ar hyd a lled Cymru, hoffem weld y clybiau nad oes ganddynt yr arian na'r arbenigedd yn cael eu galluogi i dapio i mewn i'r ymarfer da hwnnw er mwyn atal rhai o'r problemau hyn rhag codi yn y dyfodol.

Bethan Jenkins: I recognise what you say, but, in my experience—and I am just using my experience as an example, not as something for you to comment upon—you get a reaction from the council, rather than proactive behaviour in putting guidelines in place to prevent these problems. So, if there are examples of good practice the length and breadth of Wales, I would like to see those clubs that do not have the money or the expertise being able to tap into that good practice in order to prevent some of these problems from arising in the future.

[127] **Mr Gomer:** I understand fully what you are saying. A number of authorities are currently having very active conversations with the teams in their area, both rugby and football. Some of those authorities have historically, for whatever reason, managed all of the facilities, but there are many other authorities in Wales that do not manage pitches at all. Those pitches are already licensed or leased to local teams and so on. One thing that not many authorities are proactively doing at the moment is engaging with the users of those pitches. The general press reports have been about the authorities offloading pitches in difficult times for local clubs to bear the brunt. In fact, it is quite the opposite. From our experience and knowledge within local authorities, the teams that often take responsibility for their own pitches and so on are the teams that take responsibility for their direction and future. Rugby teams are a good example of that, where perhaps teams have had more of a settled base and have had responsibility for their pitches. They develop and succeed because they have a

sound basis on which to do that. Teams that rely on someone else to provide a pitch, whether it is a local authority or another organisation, can often be at the whim of changes and of the other difficulties that we have at the moment, and then cannot get that solid base and direction upon which they like to work.

[128] The positive aspect at the moment is that I know that there is a lot more proactive engagement with teams and organisations in sitting down with them to talk. There are other examples, not just within football, but generally. Local authority areas are split up into community areas—you will know that Sport Wales has a community strategy, which has been rolled out. Part of that local authority role, with the officers, is to go out to meet groups, not necessarily individual teams, but teams on an area basis, to talk about what they are doing, how they can manage more effectively, whether they need advice and guidance around financial management, and so on. So, a lot of that work is going on and we will often bring in people from Sport Wales and so forth to give additional advice and guidance. I cannot guarantee that it is happening in every area at the moment, but it is certainly being rolled out and discussed. I would be quite happy to pick that up separately.

[129] **Ann Jones:** Are there any examples in local authorities of where the entire authority comes together to support a particular sport? So, if you want to want to move the location of a pitch, do the planning people get involved, or does the football development officer, with the trust and whoever they can talk to in the leisure centre, just come up against those brick walls?

10.45 a.m.

[130] **Mr Gomer:** I can give you one excellent example—unfortunately, it is from the authority that I used to work for and the one that David will talk about, but you asked for a specific example. When the proposal came in for Caerphilly County Borough Council to relocate and have a major hospital there, it meant taking out three playing fields and so on. If there are developments on playing fields, then they must be replaced. The local authority eventually negotiated a section 106 agreement. That was done collaboratively, not just within the local authority but with the Welsh hospital estates and so forth. So, the new development is taking place in that authority because of that section 106 funding, and the site of the old hospital will become the new playing fields. At an early stage, the FAW, along with the Welsh Rugby Union and the further education college, was brought in to discuss and negotiate. The authority has just announced a £6.5 million development of a fourth generation pitch for rugby and a third generation pitch for football with shared changing facilities. It will be available for use by the college during the week, which has a centre of excellence with Merthyr Town Football Club. It also has close working relationships with Cardiff City Football Club, and it is looking at the regional rugby issue. That is one excellent example, and we would like to think, as David said, that other authorities, along with the FAW and the WRU, are looking at that model to see how it can be developed. There are other models, and David will discuss those in terms of the hubs in a few minutes.

[131] **Mr Phenis:** To pick up the last question, we recognise that football clubs are at the heart of the community and have a real role to play. So, it is a matter of supporting those clubs and not just improving things such as barriers, but ensuring that there is support for the players. It is about addressing issues such as whether there are enough players to have a team, whether they are of sufficient quality to perform well in that team, whether there are enough coaches and volunteers, whether there is funding, sponsorship and so on. There are many packages to support clubs so that they are not left isolated. However, this is quite a new thing. I have been involved in sports development for many years—some would say too long—but it is about improving that collaboration, which is essential. It is about working as a community hub and with the governing bodies of sports.

[132] The exciting part of the project with Ystrad Mynach is that you have the WRU and the FAW talking together. Their academies are working together on how they share the way they run their performance programme. Many of the academy players need an education, so we are working with education to ensure that there is a package so that if, through ability or injury, their career is finished, they can have a career outside sport. It is a complete package. We are using the brand of Cardiff City to raise the profile of football and we have a terrific literacy programme, and it is going to be a hub.

[133] We have recently put in a 3G pitch in Pontllanfraith. It would have been easy for us to re-lay the carpet, which was 15 years old. It did well to last that long and probably needed to be replaced a few years earlier, at least according to our clubs. However, we got the money and we replaced it. It would have been easy to put another carpet down, but, to their credit, key people in the FAW encouraged us to go for a 3G pitch. The pitch was not big enough to hold league fixtures and we wanted it to be able to hold league matches in future. It matches Welsh Premier League standards. We have held an international match there, Wales and Australia schools have played there, women and girls have played cup matches there—Caerphilly Castle Ladies and Girls Football Club have played a cup match at Pontllanfraith—and local clubs are now using it as their base.

[134] Planners have been involved to improve the transport routes to help people to get there. It has been open since January and the usage has increased significantly. I can provide the data for that. We are meeting with all the clubs that use it in two weeks' time to explore how we can come together and share resources. As Peter mentioned, within the Valleys local authorities, there is quite a transient element to the clubs. A new club would crop up, because people have good intentions, but then they compete for the resources, players and volunteers. So, it is about clubs working together in a community hub, and that has to involve planners, the governing bodies of sport and key individuals within local authorities.

[135] **Ann Jones:** Thank you. I think I have strayed into someone else's question. Gwyn, would you like to come in on this point?

[136] **Gwyn R. Price:** I congratulate you on having the foresight to open this facility at Pontllanfraith in Islwyn, because the people there obviously deserve this pitch. [*Laughter.*]

[137] **Mike Hedges:** To follow that up, Fields Park Pontllanfraith AFC is a Welsh league team. If we are talking about teams playing in the Welsh league and the Welsh Premier League, rather than teams that are playing in either the South Wales Amateur League or whatever the Caerphilly league is called, the football association has told us that it is investing substantially in the infrastructure of Welsh football clubs, but that it is desperate to find match funding. I also know that for clubs to be able to get funding, they need to lease grounds, because, if they are using council grounds, they cannot get funding. What do you do to signpost clubs to outside sources, such as lottery funds and money from waste disposal companies, so that they can get match funding in order to develop their facilities? Is there good advice coming out of the Welsh Local Government Association or are there exemplars within different local authorities in helping to signpost clubs to get funding from outside the FAW?

[138] **Mr Gomer:** Sport Wales and the FAW are very important partners in this. You mentioned waste disposal companies and other pots of funding. When local authorities look to lease facilities to sports teams, more often than not, there is little cost in the transfer, because local authorities often look at the lowest possible level that they can charge the teams for taking on the lease, recognising that the clubs then take the responsibility and that it saves them a considerable amount of money in terms of administering and maintaining the facilities. I can understand the comment about there being a significant lack of funding around at the moment, because we are all under terrible financial constraints. One would like to think

that there will be a post-Olympics boost in the area of lottery funding. That is one of the things that we will be looking closely at over the next couple of months.

[139] I cannot say that it is universal at the moment, but, as David discussed and I pointed out earlier, local authorities take a much more proactive role now. It is not just about sports development and local authorities getting the coaches out there and making sure that that is right. It is about giving advice and guidance to clubs to signpost them, and not just individual clubs. Different authorities have different methodologies, but one of the areas that they are looking at—there are some good examples—is coming together almost as a sports association, with football, rugby and other sports sitting down together, and rather than each one going off on a tangent looking for funding, which is often difficult if you are a single sport and you cannot get it from your governing body, by going through a sports association methodology, they can target lottery funding, because together they can provide a wider community benefit than one sport can. So, it is important to tick those boxes. It is not universal. You can probably find a lot of bad examples, but there are also good examples out there of where that type of work is going on and how that development is going forward.

[140] **Mark Isherwood:** You have largely covered this question. You have already given some examples of good practice where the installation of 3G and 4G pitches has helped develop profitable community hubs. You said that other areas were looking at or considering this. How is that information and good practice being shared and how can it be shared to ensure that local authorities in different regions pick up on that and realise that it is not so much a cost as an investment?

[141] **Mr Gomer:** David mentioned earlier the international football that was played at Pontllanfraith, and I think that at that session six other local authorities came to look at the facility and to see it in operation. There are future plans for that facility in terms of putting up a stand. In terms of the one that I mentioned earlier at Ystrad Mynach, there is a plan to put in a stand to be shared between the rugby and football teams. One of the things that we did not touch on with that, and I realise that we are talking about the Welsh leagues and the Welsh Premier League in this inquiry, is how important it is for us to nurture the next generation. There might be some scepticism among top-level clubs about 3G and playing on artificial surfaces, if we are looking at the quality of play, the encouragement of play and the continuity of play, the 3G issue is undersold.

[142] For example, this winter was not too harsh, but last winter, particularly in the use of Valleys clubs, some children did not play a competitive game of football—when I say ‘competitive’, I mean going out to the park with friends on a Saturday—from the autumn through to the September. Some teams almost entirely failed to play from the autumn onwards, because what happened was that there was a backlog of fixtures for the adult team, and the adult team took precedence. That was the decision of the committee of the adult teams—that the junior teams should almost step aside to allow the adults to fulfil their league fixtures, because if they did not, they were penalised. With the introduction of a hub—Dave has mentioned the high-level thing—we are able to use it so that, rather than one pitch being used for two hours on a Saturday, the hub can be used continually throughout the day, the evenings, school holidays and so on. You can almost hold the whole area’s football fixtures for junior level at that hub over a weekend, or over two weekends, so there is no necessity then to cancel games. Also, you do not have to invest in six pavilions if you have five or six games on one day; you invest in one pavilion and time it so that they alternate. It adds value, particularly around the quality of training, and the ability to play the game without sliding around in the mud and so on. The continuity of being able to play and train every week is vital, not just around the ability to play football, but for the health and wellbeing of our young people and adults. In terms of being able to develop that to a more senior level, we are certainly hopeful that the FAW will see the development of these top-quality 3G pitches—not the old, carpeted pitches—as being the way forward in developing the game in Wales, right to

the highest level.

[143] **Mr Phenis:** Just to add to that, there has been and there will continue to be a need for a lot of advocacy around the benefits of 3G. We have put three 3G pitches in already, and a lot of people were not convinced about using them for playing fixtures, which I feel is the added value, as well as increasing levels of participation. That use needs to be sold, and we are now in the process of capturing the impact that we have made, even since January. We have had one put in in Newbridge, and one in Bargoed, through various sources of funding, so we have been able to develop those. Pontllanffraith is very much a community hub, particularly for performance and for aspiring clubs to get into the Welsh Premier League, hopefully. So, that mechanism is there. In terms of evidence of the impact and benefits of 3G, these are still quite early days. We had many meetings with the area associations and the local leagues. Whereas clubs wanted to play their fixtures on the 3G pitches, a lot of the leagues would say, 'You are not allowed', even though the FAW and the Trust would say, 'Yes, you can play fixtures'. That was not always the case with area leagues. You want clubs to play on these surfaces on a Saturday when all grass-pitch matches are called off, but then perhaps the area association and the local leagues would say, 'Sorry, we won't allow you to play a fixture because it wouldn't be recognised as an official game'.

[144] As far as cancelled fixtures are concerned, we have had occasions, although it has been quite a good winter. We had one Sunday when all fixtures in south-east Wales were cancelled, but in Pontllanffraith there were 400 youngsters who played all day. That was the only sport played in south-east Wales, rugby or football, because all other matches were cancelled. So, it is about retaining the interest of youngsters who will be future stars. However, it will need a lot of selling. Those of us who used to play on grass and muddy pitches and used to enjoy it will need to be convinced, but we now have some 3G pitches, and as you said, we need to share that good practice and sell the benefits of that investment, and the return on that investment. I am convinced, and we are producing evidence that I am happy to share, when it is ready.

[145] **Mark Isherwood:** Will you share that with the 22 authorities?

[146] **Mr Phenis:** Absolutely.

[147] **Mark Isherwood:** The FAW told us that it strongly favoured this.

[148] **Mr Phenis:** Yes.

[149] **Mark Isherwood:** So, you can very much see local authorities taking a lead role in this—in developing it, not funding it.

[150] **Mr Phenis:** Yes, I have been to a number of authorities and met with members to answer some questions. We are an advocate for this, but I am not convinced that we have the evidence to say that it works yet. However, we will certainly share it with the 22 authorities.

[151] **Mike Hedges:** I believe that TNS play on an artificial pitch in the Welsh Premier League. On the Pontllanffraith pitch, is that the pitch that Fields Park Pontllanffraith play on, or is it separate to that? My other question—to which you might want to give a written answer—is this: do you know how many 3G pitches there are in Wales, and how they are distributed by local authority?

11.00 a.m.

[152] **Mr Gomer:** I will work backwards from your last question. Yes, we can get the information for you. In terms of 3G, there are not many at the moment, because, obviously, it

is next generation. There are three in Caerphilly, two of which are full-size and one that is smaller. We can get that evidence over the next couple of days; it will not be difficult. The FAW will have that because, in the main, it is working in partnership on that.

[153] In respect of the specific question on Fields Park, David will answer.

[154] **Mr Phenis:** The 3G pitches that we currently have are local-authority-owned sites. The challenge for us—we are working with clubs on this—is to see whether they will work on a club site. At the moment, Pontllanfraith is still using Fields Park. It prefers to play on grass for now.

[155] **Ann Jones:** We have about a quarter of an hour left and four questions. I ask that we just bear that in mind.

[156] **Kenneth Skates:** Can you expand on the comment in your paper about the transient nature of football teams/clubs? What is the impact of this and what can be done to address the situation?

[157] **Mr Gomer:** It is almost a peculiarity of Wales, in that we have a dichotomy between rugby and football. The majority of rugby clubs have a very strong social base. You have the clubhouse, and everybody knows it because it has always been there. When you look at the football teams in Wales, they far outnumber rugby clubs, but many do not have a home. They have a registered address to be part of a league, but for many, it is the pitch. It could be a council pitch, or the team could lease the pitch from somebody else. There are some good examples of teams that rely on a changing room, a stand and a field, and that is the entirety of the club. The team might support the local pub—which is fantastic—where it might have a room and a place to display trophies and so on.

[158] The situation is not helpful. Dave often says to me that we have enough teams in Wales, but not enough clubs. We have a plethora of teams, many of which rise out of the ashes of another team at any stage. Somebody can be disenchanted with their local team today, walk down the road to where there are adults and juniors and set up a new team tomorrow in direct competition with the team that is already in place. That does a great deal of damage to the team that is in place, but it may also do a disservice to the new club, in that it just does not have enough resources to get beyond the first couple of weeks of the season.

[159] That is an issue. We need to work with leagues, to be able to tell teams that they cannot do that; to tell them that they need an application process and some methodology by which teams cannot be set up overnight. We see it with juniors in particular, where a parent may become disenchanted with the fact that their child may not be progressing and then, suddenly, we find that they have got their registration and have done their Criminal Records Bureau checks and they have set up a new team. What happens then is that the local authority comes under tremendous pressure, because it may only have an all-weather pitch for certain times, and suddenly, somebody has developed this new team and demands to play there. Alternatively, since you do not have a wall around a ward boundary, you may have a team that has been playing on a particular pitch in a certain ward for 10 years or more, but then, suddenly, somebody develops a new team within the ward and they demand the use of that pitch because it is within their ward or catchment area. You cannot tell the other team to get off the pitch, because the council provides the pitches globally. It is damaging, however, and we find that it leads to a lack of continuity.

[160] Yes, you are always going to get those players who are at a higher standard aspiring to play at a higher level, and there is nothing wrong with personal ambition and development, but as I mentioned earlier, we had the specific case of a team that could not get into the next league because it could not develop its ground. The planning needed to be two or three years

down the line, as it were. The council was working well with the team on what could happen at an alternative site, less than a mile away. When the end of the season came, however, the team almost disbanded and had to be reformed because some of the players did not go up a league; they moved across. Some of it was to do with money, while some of it was to do with the fact that the team had failed to get into a higher league where some players felt they needed to play. The team went from being quite successful in getting into the league just below the Welsh league to being almost non-existent the following year. That is not sustainable; you just cannot build any good standard or quality around that, particularly, once again, coming into that next generation—the youth teams and children's teams. If you do not have that continuity and a base so that you can say, 'This is our home; this is where we play fixtures; this is where we meet', then it is very difficult to see how, 20 years down the line, the four or five-year-old who is beginning to be introduced to certain skills will end up turning out for that senior team down the road. That has to be our target and something that we have to aspire to, working with the FAW and the trust. We have to get those pathways in place. Some will always jump out at you: the Aaron Ramseys of this world will always go from here to teams like Arsenal, but it is important to have a route of progression. Some people just want a stable base so that they can play a game on a Saturday, which they enjoy. They are happy with the level at which they play and they have no aspiration to move on. However, we need to get those key planks in place. We have more than 100 years of tradition of that movement—from YMCA teams to pub teams and so on. So, it is difficult.

[161] **Mr Phenis:** I will give you an example, to break down Peter's point. There are fewer clubs but more teams, so teams are running A, B and C teams, along with senior teams and mini football teams. They are sharing those resources. There is a real drop-off in the support of volunteers, particularly after the age of 11. There are terrific numbers of youngsters playing, but, when they reach the age of 12, the parental support that was there previously is not there, so we lose the traditional volunteers. There is therefore a need to pool resources and facilities, as well as pooling players where it may not be possible to run a team. In the upper Rhymney valley, which is quite a deprived area, there were four clubs that were all struggling. They all came together, we facilitated the discussions between them, and the club is now going from strength to strength. Bizarrely, it is called 'Phoenix', as it has risen from the ashes. There is one club, it has lots of volunteers and players, it is supported by the trust and, I hope, by the authority in order to enable the club to contribute to participation and, hopefully, the next Aaron Ramsey will come from there.

[162] **Gwyn R. Price:** Could local authorities do more to engage with some of the WPL clubs in Wales to assist them to become a more crucial part of communities? I am not sure about your last point, David. I lived in Caerphilly; did the name come from your surname, Phenis?

[163] **Mr Phenis:** No, it did not. I cannot claim that one.

[164] **Mr Gomer:** It is a difficult question. I know the difficulties that the local authority in Wrexham went through with Wrexham Football Club; it did its utmost in that regard—so much so that, when my colleague there retired, he ended up on the board, because they realised that he was a hard worker and the club wanted a hard worker on the board. However, we can always do more. It is always difficult to predict exactly where things are going. Sometimes, clubs look for financial input, but it is difficult for an authority, even in the case of a Welsh Premier League club, to agree to give money, because there are other clubs looking to see what they will get out of it. I would like to think that, where there is a club of that standard in their area, local authorities see it as being a natural pathway and would help in any way possible, certainly in terms of supporting player mechanisms and the quality of players. So, even if there is not a financial commitment, some advice and guidance could be useful, in the area of governance, for example. Some teams lack that knowledge and do not know how to manage everything. When you get beyond 11 players, you start taking money,

you have to register and arrange insurance and so on. So, that is something that local authorities are becoming more involved with, because they recognise that with more people being trained up or educated in those areas, the work that needs to be done can be shared and you can then get on and do the next job. Previously, it was usual for one person to try to do it all, giving all of the necessary advice and running everything, but now local authorities see that if they offer advice, guidance and education and back that up, more people can do more. That is where the changes have come in, and that is where I would like to see good practice.

[165] **Ann Jones:** Does the WLGA have a policy about each local authority offering support, where there are Welsh Premier League clubs or feeder clubs for the Welsh Premier League? Does it direct policy through to its member authorities?

[166] **Mr Gomer:** No, we do not set policy in that respect.

[167] **Ann Jones:** Sorry, Gwyn, I jumped in there.

[168] **Gwyn R. Price:** No, that is fine, Chair.

[169] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** You say in your paper that the local league management structures need to be looked at. What are the problems and how do you think they should be addressed?

[170] **Mr Gomer:** I think that we have tried everything; maybe the carrot is working at the moment—the stick certainly did not seem to work. As Members, you may well have come across this in your local areas. If you are in a border area—I am not necessarily talking about the England-Wales border, but an authority that prior to 1996 was part of a district or county council—you will find that some league management structures are still based on the post-1974 arrangements and some are based on the pre-1974 arrangements. So, you can have three league management structures in one authority alone. Every year without fail, we get members beside themselves because children in their community are denied the opportunity to play with school colleagues because they live on the wrong side of the river in the same town. South Wales Valleys authorities are very prone to that, because of the old east Gwent and Rhondda Cynon Taf boundaries, as are a number in north Wales. The leagues have never restructured, and, even if they did, I do not think that it would be the answer. There is a clause within the rule book that I used to get quoted to me on an annual basis, which, in my view, clubs used to hide behind, which is that, if they are not resident in their area, a young person must have approval from the league to play outside the league. It might seem a minor point, but it builds up such antagonism within communities that parents can withdraw their children altogether. We are talking about 11-year-olds that are going on to the next youth level, and it means that you possibly lose them forever. That is not an exaggeration; once they are turned off, they are turned off. If they see adults dictating and seemingly behaving irrationally, they immediately think, ‘I don’t want to be a part of that’. That is certainly the parents’ attitude. It is a very expensive process for a team to apply to the management structure to get a dispensation. Teams have to apply annually to the league, and it costs them around £400 to get an answer to the simple question of whether a young person can play in the league for next season. The league will often only give permission for one year, and until that child is of an age where they have gone beyond that league and out of that structure, they can be restricted. We have tried the stick; I have got to the stage of threatening to withdraw all the facilities from the teams while that continued. That did not work. They appealed, that was agreed, and it was, ‘Another year out of the way—let’s brush it under the carpet for another 12 months’.

[171] As David alluded to in his earlier answer, because the carrot is there now in these fantastic hub facilities that are beginning to be developed, leagues have to agree not only to allow the children to play outside their area of control, but also to let the whole league play

outside their area of control. So, instead of 20 matches being played on a weekend on 20 different pitches spread in one league area from the Blaenau Gwent area to the east side of Caerphilly, there are now two hubs, one in Blaenau Gwent and one in Caerphilly, and half of the teams play their matches on one pitch on one weekend while the other half of the teams play their fixtures on the other pitch. The following weekend, the teams can rotate, if that is the way they want to do it. So, you can have a situation where the league has had to agree to go outside its area, because the facilities are so fantastic that they will dispense with this clause.

[172] My personal view—I emphasise that it is not the WLGA's view—is that if we are to move forward again in terms of the development of the Welsh Premier League, all football in Wales and for participation in general, we seriously need to look at the league management structures in Wales, and bring them into 2012 rather than them staying in 1974 when they were established.

[173] **Mike Hedges:** Have you taken this up with the Welsh FA? Every league management structure and every rule of the league has to be approved by the county association and then by the Football Association of Wales. As such, the FAW has the power to suspend the league and refuse to allow it to register, in which case it would have no referees, would not be eligible to use council pitches and would not have the insurance cover and so forth if it did not obey it. Have you taken this up with the FAW?

11.15 a.m.

[174] **Mr Gower:** We have had discussions. It is for the FAW to comment, but the power lies within the local league structures, which have the voting rights at the high level. Until that structure is changed, we are going to be hamstrung by what we have at the moment.

[175] **Mike Hedges:** What you said is not actually true. Power in Welsh football lies with the Football Association of Wales. Local leagues have one representative to the county association on it.

[176] **Mr Gower:** From when I have tried to do this before, my understanding is that the power base is still strong enough within the local league structure to be able to almost dictate the continuation of the present structure. It is an interesting issue. I would like that area to be examined in terms of what could be done with the league structure. It is an honestly held belief of mine—I have no particular issue and I am not a supporter of any particular club—that everything else seems to be falling into place and people are collaborating and co-operating. I am not knocking the leagues in terms of the fantastic work that they do, but we do need to look at the league structure within Wales and its governance, to give us a clearer pathway, from children right through to adults, so that we do not get this annual conflict.

[177] **Joyce Watson:** What are local authorities doing to develop football in communities, particularly among those that might feel excluded, disadvantaged or marginalised, for example, black and ethnic minority people, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, or even disabled people, perhaps?

[178] **Mr Gower:** Generally, all local authorities, through their policies and in anything that they do, will be totally inclusive in not permitting the exclusion of players from within those teams for any reason relating to race, gender or whatever. Through the structures, the advice, guidance and training that are now given to teams, coaches and so forth are very clear about their role. David gave an example earlier of girls' and women's football. Authorities, at the pain of being complained about by other teams, have done work to develop facilities that are not based on men's football—the fields and so on are the same size, but the changing facilities have been developed with a female audience in mind, if you like, with the aim of

trying to attract more girls into football. Work has been done on that and will continue to be done on that in terms of developing facilities. Sometimes, the facilities are so dire that some of the roughest and toughest of the men should not be going in there, never mind female users.

[179] In terms of black and ethnic minorities, there are very good examples in the Cardiff and Newport areas, where they are active and run many teams, both on a segregated basis, if you like, in terms of people wishing to play with people from their own ethnic groups, but also in integrated teams. David is heavily involved in disability sport, and all local authorities are heavily involved with Disability Sports Wales in driving forward sporting activities generally, including football for young people and adults, so that they can participate. I would like to think that it will happen more and more as we are developing artificial pitches. It is easy, almost, for disabled people to play indoors in the sports hall, but they cannot do it on a grass pitch. With the artificial pitches that we are developing, it may become easier for those who are not as physically able to participate in some of the games on full-size pitches as opposed to playing inside in the sports hall. There are many opportunities there and things that we can look at. Certainly, my experience is that sport, more than anything else, breaks barriers down. There have been issues in the past, but more and more you see that sport has integrated these areas, purely because it is about sport, as opposed to the outside political issues that can often lead to some of the tensions around gender, race and so forth. There is a lot of evidence around that, where they have been integrated and supported.

[180] **Ann Jones:** We have run out of time. I thank you both for your evidence today. You will receive a copy of the transcript to check for accuracy. You said that you would provide us with some detail on a couple of points, but that information does not necessarily have to be in by next week.

[181] **Mr Gomer:** I will commit to getting the information on third-generation pitches to you—that will not be a difficult task. David's task is more important, as he has committed to giving you an evaluation report on the first year, or part of that year, particularly around the hubs at Pontllanffraith and Bargoed. I think that that would be valuable information for the committee.

[182] **Ann Jones:** That would be good. Thank you ever so much for your attendance today.

11.21 a.m.

**Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog Rhif 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd o'r
Cyfarfod**

**Motion under Standing Order No. 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public from
the Meeting**

[183] **Ann Jones:** I move that

the committee resolves to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Standing Order No. 17.42(vi).

[184] I see that the committee is in agreement.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.
Motion agreed.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 11.21 a.m.
The public part of the meeting ended at 11.21 a.m.*

