

**Darlith yr Archif Wleidyddol Gymreig 22 Tachwedd 2023: Synnwyr nid swnian:  
ffordd ymlaen i Gymru well  
Yr Athro Laura McAllister**

**The Welsh Political Archive Annual Lecture 22 November 2023: Reason not rancour:  
a route to a better Wales  
Professor Laura McAllister**

Noswaith dda pawb, a diolch yn fawr am ddod i'r ddarlith yma heno. Diolch hefyd i Archif Wleidyddol Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru am fy ngwahodd i dra-ddodi ddarlith flynyddol fawr-eddog hon.

Rwy'n gwybod bod ni i gyd braidd yn rhwystredig yn dilyn canlyniad Cymru neithiwr. Dyw hi byth yn hawdd, a'n methiannau ni yn gynharach yn y grŵp sy'n golygu bod angen i ni roi cynnig ar y gemau ail gyfle i gyrraedd yr Almaen yr haf nesaf.

Mae'n berthnasol i ddarlith heno i ddweud bod angen i ni ddechrau credu nad yw methu cyrraedd y Euros yn ddigon da. Ond rydyn ni'n gwybod ei fod yn ein dwylo ni a bydd yn rhaid i ni ddangos y gwydnwch nodweddiadol hwnnw ym mis Mawrth.

Bydd llawer mwy i'w ddweud am chwaraeon yn y ddarlith hon, peidiwch â phoeni!

Ond roeddwn i eisiau sôn am JOMEC a sut mae'r sefydliad hwn o Brifysgol Caerdydd yn cyd-fynd yn dda iawn â themâu fy narlith heno.

Mae'r cyfryngau yn un o bileri canolog y Gymru fodern, ynghyd â'n timau chwaraeon cenedlaethol a chymaint o sefydliadau eraill.

Mae JOMEC a Phrifysgol Caerdydd yn helpu i hyfforddi'r gen-hedlaeth bresennol, a'r genhedlaeth nesaf, o newydd-iadurwyr i adrodd ein stori.

Regaining knowledge of our own history in order to tell our story - in both Welsh and English - is absolutely crucial. Many of us are strangers in our own land - with little knowledge of our national history and frighteningly low levels of awareness of how politics

operates here. That's basic democratic literacy - three quarters of us say the media doesn't have enough coverage about how Wales is run, whilst a third of us think health is controlled by Rishi Sunak, a figure that hasn't budged since a decade ago, despite Covid.

And, as we sit here drws nesaf i BBC Cymru, I'm reminded of the words of the late, great John Davies, who wrote the history of the corporation here in Wales. "The nation in its fullness has yet to be" said John - a simple, but profound reminder for a country built on an ancient history and heritage, but with modern foundations. Yet, despite its longevity, Cymru is a nation that's still finding its voice and sense of self. The usage of "Cymru" (recently promoted by the Football Association of Wales in particular) is important here, isn't it? "Cymru" means defining ourselves in our own ancient language as *the Cymry*, "our fellow countrywomen and men", as opposed to "Wales", which we might own confidently by now, but which remains a description of us forged by others. Control and authority over our own nomen-clature is significant. It is about self-determination in the widest sense, and shared responsibility for our future will only come if there's a shared understanding of our history and heritage.

That will be a theme running throughout my lecture tonight.

It pains me that we are a nation so rich in talent, imagination and passion, but painfully poor when measured against so many more basic metrics. Wales is a table topper, a champion even, but regrettably in leagues in which no one wants to compete - a reverse beauty contest of economic success, quality of employment and public transport, incarceration rates and environmental degradation.

Yet, it's not as if Welsh talent is in short supply. From Cranogwen to Frances Hogan; from Luke Evans to Catherine Zeta-Jones; from Jess Fishlock to Geraint Thomas; from Karl Jenkins to Adwaith. But traditionally, we've exported our human talent in the same way we shipped out coal, steel, slate and water. We've waved people off in search of better jobs and pay, then failed to provide our younger diaspora especially, with sufficient incentive for an early return.

What I'd like to discuss this evening is how we build a Wales where you'd be daft *not* to come home. Or, if you're *not* Welsh, not to actively choose to come here for a unique

quality of life with well-being at its heart, a breathtaking landscape, vibrant culture and sport, and a proper sense of community.

Now, if you're of a cynical bent, you might call that an idealistic pipe dream from someone who *mostly* doesn't have to take hard decisions in an increasingly tough economic environment. But, as I will explain, the cynicism we hear from our fellow citizens is experiential and comes from centuries of suppression that has bred a fundamental lack of confidence and self-belief. There's plenty to be proud of, but confidence and a touch of tall poppy syndrome is holding us back.

So much of our modern history can be framed by the history of institutions - not a history of buildings or offices like this one - but a history of people - the people occupying, representing, studying, researching, using these lumps of concrete to understand, develop and disseminate our collective national story.

Ar y nodyn yna, hoffwn ddiolch yn ffurfiol i'r Archif Wleidyddol yn Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru am y fraint enfawr o gael gwahoddiad i roi'r ddarlith flynyddol eleni.

I have many "happy" memories of afternoons spent at the Llyfrgell in Penglais, searching for documents on DJ and Noelle Davies, on Robert Owen and the early thinking on Utopianism, Fabianism and anarcho-syndicalism whilst I was working on my (niche) PhD in the mid-1990s.

That kind of intense research can certainly be an isolating and, at times, a lonely experience, but I'll always remember the kindness and helpfulness of the staff at the National Library of Wales. The Llyfrgell is a genuine jewel in Cymru's crown - its treasures we need to preserve for sure, but we should also support its modernisation and development by properly investing in its future.

Yn yr un modd, mae'r Archif Wleidyddol Gymreig yn gad-wrfa holl-bwysig, sy'n ol-rhain datblygiad gwleidyddol a democrataidd ein cenedl. Nid yn unig trwy bapurau a hanesion ein gwragedd a'n gwŷr mawr – er eu bod i gyd yno, wrth gwrs – ond trwy ddog-fennaeth sy'n adrodd hanes ein mudiadau cymdeithasol a'n grwpiau protest, a'r papurau yn Archif Menywod Cymru sy'n dogfennu'r straeon am y merched niferus, a oedd â'r hyder i fod yn af-lonyddwyr cadarn-haol ac i newid Cymru drwy eu gweith-redoedd a'u geiriau.

Let me set out the objectives of my lecture tonight. You will have gathered, it's my analysis of contemporary Wales. It's a very long way from a puff piece, dwelling on all that's good and ignoring all that's evidently not good. So it might make for uncomfortable listening at times.

But it's not intended as a point-scoring demolition of what's been done since devolution over the past quarter of a century. Like the proverbial curate's egg, there's good and bad, world-beating and shoddy, ambitious and innovative, and lazy and exclusive. All the more reason to operate an open door to critics, especially as we know that, despite 24 years of devolution, the dial hasn't shifted on the most critical indices that impact people's lives most.

I hope I can construct a balanced evaluation of why that's the case, whilst offering some suggestions as to how this might change. And the "we" in this has to be *all* of us, not just Welsh Government ministers, our MSs and MPs, or our local councillors. My interpretation of "leadership" has always been much broader and more inclusive than just those currently steering the political ship. They're important custodians sure, but it includes every one of us who could exercise influence in our communities.

I start from a conviction that the political and economic system of Britain is fatally flawed. "Broken" is a strong word, but there can be little argument that it is damaged and frayed at the edges, and politics is increasingly practiced in a space pockmarked by incivility, disdain and disrespect. I'm not suggesting that's irreparable, but one thing is indisputable. Change is imperative, so I hope my modest suggestions in this lecture are taken in the right spirit - as a constructive and positive intervention from someone who has skin in the game - but thick enough skin to cope with the push back too!

Specifically, I want to talk up the necessity for a new contract between the people and the state. A new, broader, more inclusive leadership has to be based on a different treaty between we, the people and our leaders.

If you step outside the bubble - as our critics often fairly label it - into an ordinary pub or cafe, you'll soon realise that the relationship between the people and our leaders is fundamentally broken. According to IPPR and YouGov research, two thirds of us don't

trust our politicians. And according to the ONS's recent UK Trust in Government survey, only 35% of people trusted the UK Government, below an already poor OECD average of 41%. No great shock when we see the cavalier attitude to truth, power and representation at Westminster of late - in the revolving door leadership we've had at UK Gov, bookmarked by the Brexit shenanigans and the chaotic and sclerotic reigns of Prime Ministers Johnson and Truss, both of whom were singularly ill-equipped to lead anything, never mind a government.

At a systemic level, we must at least acknowledge that, far from a contract between governed and governors, we have a bitter enmity based on disrespect and distrust. The longer this continues, the greater the risk of it becoming the norm. A Lockean-style social contract is absolutely fundamental when it comes to those elected to represent us. Somewhere in the dominant Anglo-Saxon tradition of representative democracy, we've lost the sense of politics as being less us and them, and more a symbiotic, two-way relationship between those elected and we, the citizens who have given them a temporary mandate to speak for us.

That begs the question of how do we resurrect trust in era of extreme public distrust. How do we build truth in an age of untruths? As Machiavelli wrote: "those princes who have done great things have considered keeping their word of little account, and have known how to beguile men's minds by shrewdness and cunning."

We live in a time when political power still follows those Machiavellian precepts, where deceit and sleight-of-hand are deployed as tactical weapons. But Machiavelli's point was that the results of using that power would engender the support of the public. In our contemporary political world, our leaders are increasingly failing to deliver the means to justify those ends.

I believe we need a refocus in Wales, on trust, on leadership and on representation.

I'm going to draw tonight on some of my own recent professional experiences, especially my roles as UEFA Vice President and Executive Committee member, and as co-chair of the Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales.

I will come to the Commission shortly.

My other role is a brand new one. I'm only six months into that work on UEFA - European football's governing body, an organisation representing 55 nations and with a budget of nearly 5 billion Euros. It's fair to say that I'm on learning curve as steep as the Eiger!

I've already learnt a great deal, including that power is coveted in football as much if not more than it is in politics. To paraphrase sports journalist, Graham Thomas, football politics makes the EU look like a rural community council!

Power in football is jealously guarded but generously resourced. We (as in Wales) have to be in the room and around the board table if we are to have any chance of influencing things. Now, as I sit in meetings every week in UEFA's plush Geneva lakeside HQ, I'm conscious that I'm the first ever Welsh representative in those corridors of power (and the first woman to become a Vice-President). It fills me with pride to see the Ddraig Goch represented so visibly there alongside the footballing superpowers of Italy, France, Germany and England.

It's basic - Wales is an independent football nation and recognised for what we do on and off the pitch. We have the same right to be in the room, we are every bit as good as any other nation - and better than many.

I'm the only woman on Ex Co. *Literally*, the token woman! Not that I haven't been there before. One doesn't work in the world of Welsh sport for as long as I have without that being a familiar story! But I see this differently, I'm the woman who represents thousands of other women in demanding our rightful place at the heart of football decision-making.

Being the sole woman brings risks but it also brings opportunities. In a matter of months, I've been asked to work on the overarching organisational strategy for UEFA. I'm deputy chair of UEFA's Women's Football Committee and working on the new women's football strategy, this at a time when the game grows exponentially, with two million players and an ambition to be a one billion Euro industry with its growth five times faster than men's football. That fact alone makes a mockery of how football has systematically excluded women's voices.

I'm Chair of UEFA's new Environmental and Social Sustainability Committee, a body that's responsible for green matters, equality, human rights, the circular economy and event sustainability.

Cymru at the heart of some of the most important agendas in global football. But those agendas are not all progressing without challenge or resistance. I don't need to remind you of what happened at the FIFA Women's World Cup this summer where we witnessed the shocking behaviours of a football leader whose deep-seated misogyny displayed itself in grotesque crotch-grabbing and a hideous, forced kiss on a celebrating female player.

Now, it would have been very easy for me to openly criticise this appalling behaviour (probably in CAPITALS on social media!). Indeed, I was asked many times why I *hadn't* commented. The answer is clear; I understand UEFA and football well enough to know that's simply *not* the way to have any impact on this matter, or to engineer change. This is an environment and culture where behind the scenes alliances and deals prevail. Dirty washing in public is massively frowned upon. But I'd talked publicly, even in my election campaign, about the systemic misogyny and discrimination that blights football. So when the UEFA President decided to examine the cultural and gender problems our game faces, I was the board member they turned to, and I'm now leading a project to devise some solutions. My point is - leadership isn't always theatre.

I've learnt that, as ever in complex organisations, we need to unapologetically "game" systems to draw benefits for Cymru. Ireland has a reputation of doing exactly that in the EU, especially with its international diaspora. International relations might not be devolved but economic levers are.

Sports diplomacy is especially critical to a relatively small nation like Wales, particularly in bridging the awareness deficit that exists. Given we have to rethink our place in the world, maybe sport isn't a bad place to start. Our international athletes and fans are ambassadors in tracksuits. Last year, Cymru's Grand Prix-winning campaign, "Wales To The World" showcased our nation to a global audience after we qualified for the men's FIFA World Cup finals for the first time in 64 years. This marketing campaign used the people of Wales as messengers to tell our own nation's stories. The figures on engagement are impressive - PR activity led to 540 pieces of media coverage globally, creating an estimated 8 billion viewing opportunities. The rainbow bucket hat incident - that

unintended moment in Qatar but with deliberate and orchestrated consequences - was covered in over 140 countries, selling Wales's values to the world.

Transplanting lessons from football to the rest of society is never simple, but it remains one of the few really concrete examples of us (mostly) getting it right. I am so proud of Wales, but it pains me to say that our national psyche is a little too prone to accepting its lot. There are a host of good reasons for this of course but, like athletes, we have to work on our weaknesses if we're to become stronger.

Sometimes I worry we've become inured to seeing ourselves as less able. A lack of diversity politically and socially has left us content with mediocrity and acclimatised to underachievement.

Sometimes, we don't even realise how we're held in esteem by others - aside from sport, look at our media and creative industries. Go to London or Manchester or Scotland, and the Welsh system of producers, studios and public broadcasters and as a location for drama commissions is seen as an almighty success story - that's a sector with an annual turnover of £1.7 billion.

Likewise in the world of culture and linguistic policy, unique institutions like the Urdd and Eisteddfod Genedlaethol are seen as the most vibrant anywhere in Europe.

The theatre of public life doesn't have massive allure to introverts - I know because I am one myself - and, I hope they'll forgive me if I'm being too presumptuous, possibly even our First Minister and my co-chair of the Constitutional Commission, Dr Rowan Williams. But many of us introverts *are* here doing things in public, mainly because we believe it's important that we do.

We need far more diverse leaders. More pluralism means better leadership. But I don't underestimate the challenge of encouraging others to come forward to take on what are difficult roles. It's not as if we are living in an era of great civility and respect, is it? Taking on any public-facing position brings with it a healthy exposure to scrutiny but also, a flood of abuse. I've been called - "a self-indulgent waffler", "a lady who hasn't held down a real job in her life", "a man-hating feminist extremist" and an "English tax-funded socialist clown"!



But then I've also had strangers come up to me to thank me for trying to make a difference. In the World Cup in Qatar this time last year, a Wales fan broke down in tears as he told me that my stance over the infamous rainbow bucket hat had given him the confidence to tell his male friends about his teenage child who'd recently come out as gay. I often think of him when I read the @Walesonline comments section (not for the faint hearted at the best of times!).

The abuse, I'm afraid to say, comes with the territory, especially for women. But even so, we shouldn't accept it as inevitable. As we seek change, civility and respect should be embedded as a foundation.

On my now weekly flights to Geneva, I was reading "Speaking Up", the autobiography of Gillian Triggs, deputy General Secretary of the United Nations. As well as daring women to be a little vulgar and outspoken (which I love!), she reminded us that speech and voice have been claimed by men since Homer's Odyssey. Telemachus scolded his mother, saying that "speech will be the business of men", or as Mary Beard said, the first of many examples of a man telling a woman to shut up! But it was the book's cover endorsement from Geoffrey Robertson that caught my eye. He talked of Triggs "refuting her detractors with reason, not rancour." That should be how we all deal with our detractors; listen, engage and challenge.

My own personal experience of leadership leads me to two key learnings:

- first, we should dispel the Weberian myth of the charismatic, authoritative leader. It's male, it's exclusionary, it's a cloak for concealing over-simplistic idealism, or downright incompetence.

- second, we should resurrect the idea of public service and public duty, but recast it differently and compellingly. My mother, who was a proud Maesteg girl and daughter of a NUM lodge chairman, believed contributing to your community was an obligation as basic as supporting your family. My mum was a social worker in every sense and she taught us that to contribute publicly was a duty, a responsibility and a privilege.

So, I'm in favour of a more boring, functional form of leadership; one based less on lofty and aspirational slogans and more on instigating practical, meaningful change - but always

with the aim of delivering for the people we serve. That could form the basis for the new social contract, a bridge to rebuild trust amongst the public for our leaders.

The first and only female Prime Minister in Australia's history, Barry-born Julia Gillard memorably talked of the extremely narrow path that women leaders tread (or, for that matter, anyone who isn't a white male of a certain age). It's a path littered with obstacles and pot holes, to be navigated with extreme caution, for there are deep trenches filled with metaphorical sharks on either side.

In our debates on diversifying leadership, we'd do well to remember that power is not a zero-sum game; it's better shared, like any good meal. Drinking alone in the pub of power is a pretty melancholic experience. Sure, power's rather nice and makes us feel good, it's seductive and therefore corrupting. But, once *with* authority, one should try to give away as much power as possible - in a deserving and diverse manner - especially to those who can refresh and renew in a spirit of challenge.

There's absolutely no shortage of talent out there, but often spotting this is hard for a generation of conventional leaders. Leaders usually recruit in their own image; they (often inadvertently) create conditions to protect themselves and avoid being removed from power. Organisations become horribly lacking in any representational, experiential or cognitive diversity. They become stale and stagnate, frequently failing to even recognise it as they start over on the same cycle. And so it continues...

From Number 10 to the CBI, from the WRU to Amgueddfa Cymru, toxic cultures are very much in the news. It seems to me that this often just means ones that are lacking in diversity, often dominated by alpha men. Work spaces lacking in diversity promulgate unwise decisions, partial perspectives and missed opportunities. The implications of this are enormous.

Ultimately, toxic organisations are spawned from a social sphere where two-thirds of unpaid labour is undertaken by women, men on average earn over 11% more than women, and women are forced out of the labour market by inadequate, expensive and inflexible child care. And then, of course, they return as part-timers, despite almost always working full-time.

The unedifying exposure of Welsh Rugby Union culture was chastening for all of us who care about sport. Not only were her warnings that the misogynistic culture was a “ticking time bomb” singularly ignored, but one of the most successful Welsh business people, Amanda Blanc was questioned by the board as to whether she had sufficient business experience to be in the room. Really?!

But, the truth is there are similar skills profile in every sports governing body with which I’ve worked. High on uniformity - and strangely confident about their right to be there (no imposter syndrome here!) - but low on range of competences and resistant to challenge. Only a fool would throw stones in a sporting glass house. My work in football - the biggest and most powerful sport in the world - shows similarly dysfunctional governance at all levels and, I have to say, a lack of urgency to change at the pace it clearly should.

The collapse in trust between people and their leaders has happened in parallel to a stronger rhetoric about women’s rights and participation. The weakness is in how those progressive and liberal impulses - which let’s remember are popular with most ordinary people - have been packaged with an increasingly broken and disconnected political system.

Wherever this disconnection comes from, we need to engage with it before politics becomes so dirty that no one will ever choose to get involved. Symptomatic of this is how politics has polarised and become part of the wider culture wars - ideas are mobilised by politicians to “farm engagement” on social media, or to boost their personal stock within their parties.

Suella Braverman wilfully mischaracterised fringe groups in the Gaza ceasefire marches as representing the bulk of peaceful protestors. This was deliberately designed to fire up a section of the public and her party, but which could not be defended by her Prime Minister or her party, even though Sunak had echoed those same sentiments. That’s the problem of governing through stoking division. Of replacing reasoned differences of opinion with a discourse based on rage and exploited emotions.

“With great power comes great responsibility”, a quote which the internet by the way, attributes variously to the French Revolution, the 19th century MP William Lamb, and the

Marvel superhero Spiderman! Whoever said it, power must be for a purpose, not as an end in itself.

I've tried to exercise any minimal power I've had collaboratively and purposefully. I'm passionately committed to Welsh self-government and to the work of our Senedd, whilst being very mindful of its flaws. Indeed, my academic work has been all about critiquing devolution, but with a view to its improvement, not its destruction.

Our Expert Panel report in 2017 'A Parliament that Works for Wales' paved the way for what many said could not be done; it explained the arguments and created the evidence base for a consensus-based reform of our national parliament, for a larger fit-for-purpose Senedd, with electoral reform and gender quotas.

I recently gave evidence to the Committee that's examining the new Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill. There's plenty to applaud in the Bill, but some elements that need serious challenge. Our Expert Panel rejected the Closed List PR system at the first stage of evaluation, for two simple reasons: it reduces voter choice and creates no direct lines of accountability with electors, and secondly, it encourages the over-dominance of the party machine. Closed Lists put more power into the hands of party bosses, risking rewarding loyalty and longevity, rather than calibre and contribution. Closed lists promote conservatism and conformism, risking a race to the bottom.

Politics is all about "what ifs", isn't it? It's worth wondering where we might be if those 6,700-odd votes in 1997 had gone the other way. The "Abolish the Assembly" guys (and the leaders *are* mostly men) demonstrate, there are some who live here who don't even accept the concept of Wales as a historic national territory with a distinct identity of its own. Those who lead this charge are deliberate in their casual dismissal and undermining of our still relatively young democracy. They show no inclination to offer a single intelligent or properly thought-through argument as to why the Senedd should be abolished. They are iconoclastic and destructive, often fuelled by scarcely concealed desires to submerge Wales further into an England-and-Wales entity.

Of course, many people who are definitely *not* anti-Welsh feel disillusioned with devolution, failing to see how it's improved their lives. Many also confuse government with the institution - understandable when the same party has been in power throughout. A

bedrock of political discontent offers added allure to lash out at politicians, especially when there's unhappiness at specific government decisions, like 20 miles per hour or some of the Covid lockdown restrictions.

But really, where else in the world does a people call for an end to its democratically-elected national institution when they disagree with what the government has done? It's a unique feature of Wales, and a bizarre and dangerous one too. If devolution is threatened, it'll more likely be by slow erosion through neglect and disinterest, rather than a big bang.

Even during the arrogant and blatant disregard for ordinary people's lives and the refusal to obey the orders given to the rest of us during Covid displayed in "Partygate", even Liz Truss's budget omnishambles, or during Boris Johnson's illegal prorogation of Parliament, I didn't hear much clicking of online petitions calling for the Westminster Parliament to be dismantled.

I understand how populism works. It's not about the inadequacies of those supporting such movements. Populism is directly connected to fundamental failures in how our democracies operate. But right now, populism feels like a powerful run-away truck that the many who feel alienated and disenchanting will naturally jump onboard. There *is* a constituency for "Abolish" in Wales. Our polling show getting rid of the Senedd has similar support to independence, so, as I said earlier, we should listen and engage and refute with reason, not rancour.

So, where does all this leave us? First, needing to acknowledge a serious and fundamental democratic deficit within Welsh politics.

As Co-Chair of the Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales, it's been an honour to share that workload with my co-chair, Dr Rowan Williams. Rowan and I might be from different backgrounds, and with different perspectives on politics and life, but I'm proud that we've become a tight team, and that includes the diverse group of Commissioners who've really put their backs into this project.

We haven't quite finished yet (January 18th is the date for your diary), but a couple of clear learnings have already emerged. Establishing a good culture and an open, trusted space for all opinions is critical when there are diverse views but mutual respect.

Clarity over the task in hand is a second learning. The Commission agreed early on to frame our analysis of a better constitutional model for Wales, around governance changes that can improve delivery for people - not to satisfy academic arguments - moving away from the “that’s for the anoraks” sneer. Ensuring that our citizens have both voice and agency was a critical pre-requisite for the Commission’s work. Only this can provide the necessary legitimacy for our arguments and recommendations.

We’ve had a proper go at a genuine National Conversation, directly reaching out to those not normally engaged in this type of discussion. That’s by no means an easy task, but it’s been a real experiment in innovative engagement. We’ve heard the opinions of thousands of people from diverse walks of life. We’ve worked in colleges, supermarkets and agricultural shows, through rap, visual arts, and poetry, alongside more traditional methods - can’t say we haven’t tried to make matters constitutional more exciting!

Our Commission started from the principle that anything presumed right and appropriate for Scotland to control, should also be deemed appropriate for Wales. Removing the exceptionalism around Wales that usually has little rationale bar a political history of “England and Wales-ism”. And we anchored our work in values which we applied to all of the constitutional alternatives we felt were viable - values like agency, accountability, equality and subsidiarity.

In the Commission’s interim report, published in December last year, we identified ten pressure points that jeopardise the Union. This led us to conclude that the current settlement “is not a reliable or sustainable basis for the governance of Wales in the future.” For me, most significant are the fundamental flaws in current relationships between the different governments across the UK. To be frank, there can only be one way to conduct inter-governmental relations, and that’s on parity of esteem and mutual respect. DEL?

Yet, we learned from the UK Covid Inquiry that UK politicians and officials bristled at the idea of making joint decisions with Wales, even during a major crisis like a global pandemic.

As an aside, the Welsh Government’s refusal to hold a Covid inquiry here looks more indefensible by the day. Such an inquiry is a fundamental part of the social contract that

should exist between us, the people, and politicians. It should be an examination of the specific preparedness of our government for a pandemic, of the efficacy of its crisis management and the effectiveness of its political decision-making. Notwithstanding the constraints of a UK political and economic framework, facing humanity's biggest challenge in maybe a century, we need to know did our devolved government - with responsibility for health remember - step up to the plate? The answers to these questions have profound implications for us all and to avoid a Welsh enquiry means to shun proper and rigorous scrutiny.

Back to the Commission - we've examined three constitutional models:

- Strengthening and enhancing the current devolution settlement;
- A federal approach, with a new UK constitution based on parity between Wales, England, Scotland and Northern Ireland;
- Independence, where Wales would become a sovereign country, eligible to apply for full membership of international organisations, such as the EU or UN.

Each is deemed a viable option for Wales's future and they underline our ambition to consider change in the boldest sense. Of course, all of these alternatives come with risks, but each comes with significant opportunities too. All require significant structural change and, importantly (and potentially problematically) support from a UK Government. There are things that should be changed in the meantime as a matter of urgency or quite frankly, there will be no status quo to retain. Improved IGR and strengthening the Sewel convention, which has been singularly ignored by the UK Government should feature prominently here.

I've alluded to the connection between challenge and confidence. This has to start at home with each one of us. So, next I'd like to rehearse a few simple challenges that I apply to myself and my approach to decision-making.

First, "What's the worst that can happen?!" Genuinely, it is so easy to overthink change in a way that puts a brake on any innovation. Change is always risky but brimful of opportunity too, especially when the necessity to change things is so self-evident.

We need to reframe our ambitions by aiming high, but acknowledge that loftier aspirations will mean more failures. Great things are done in teams, ideally teams where no one seeks praise but where people are comfortable to take risks and learn from failure.

My second personal mantra is the Persian phrase - repurposed in the west as Solomon's Seal - don't ask me why! - that "this too shall pass". Everything is transient and, even our most challenging personal and professional chapters will soon enough be tomorrow's chip paper. Knowing that bad times are followed by good creates a safer space to take risks and be bold.

Thirdly - a habit drawn directly from my time as a sportswoman - is to regularly ask myself "Am I frightened, or just nervous?" I remember learning in my pre-match routine before big matches to contextualise and manage the differences between anticipation, nerves and fear. Because they're very different things, as I know from this experience tonight! Nerves can create adrenaline and excitement, and a subsequent uplift in performance. Fear, when re-thought of in this way, can be a stimulus, not a repellent and, after all, leaders grasp nettles.

I've spent long on the problems we face as a nation, as well as my hypothesis for why they're so stubbornly tricky to tackle. In the spirit of my words, you'd rightly challenge me if I left it at that!

Felly, wrth gloi, dyma rai awgrymiadau rwyf yn eu cyflwyno'n barchus fel sylfaen i'r cytundeb rhwng pobl a'r rhai sy'n gwneud y penderfyniadau:

Rhif un: "Get the basics right." Switch focus to *doing* not just deliberating. We have to prioritise *making* changes happen, not willing them over the line.

At the end of the day, delivery trumps grand ideas, especially when it's hard to pay the bills. "Just do it" as the sports-shoe manufacturer puts it...

Let me give you a few examples:

Miliwn o siaradwyr Gymraeg erbyn 2050, er enghraifft. I think most of us agree with this ambitious goal. But what's the path to its realisation? Surely, first of all, we must win over



the hearts and minds of all people, whether they speak Cymraeg or not. There is hope: a 2018 opinion poll revealed 83% of non-Welsh speakers were proud of the language and 63% of thought more should be done to support it. Yet, less than half of Welsh speakers, and over a third of non-Welsh speakers, thought the language would be stronger in a decade's time. Understandable given recent alarming figures showing how vulnerable use of Welsh is, especially in its heartlands.

Our fine Ysgolion Cymraeg continue to flourish and I'm proud and delighted that our girls are already bilingual. But "restoring the Welsh language...is nothing less than a revolution. It is only through revolutionary means that we can succeed." So said Saunders Lewis in his seminal radio broadcast in 1962, "Tynged yr Iaith". Many Wales football fans were belting out Yma o Hyd last night, but we can't sing "Bydd yr Iaith Gymraeg yn fyw" and hope it'll just happen. It's a goal that cannot be reached without some dramatic decisions on converting a far larger number of schools to Welsh-medium. Huge implications for local government, for teacher training and the wider profession but again, if we're hyping that goal, we'd better be ready to be radical and be happy to have our feet held to the fire too.

Are we really on track to reaching net zero by 2030? If this is to be a transformational and achievable pledge, we'd be seeing a Costa Rica-style policy package to decarbonise Cymru, linking a greener future to eco-tourism. The number of natural species in Wales has declined by 20%. Meanwhile, 65% of visitors to Cost Rica cite eco-tourism as their motivation, not surprising given they can see jaguars, toucans and howler monkeys there. Costa Rica is the only tropical country to have reversed deforestation. How? Through culture change and good state leadership from those like environment minister, Alvaro Umana, using tools like a fossil fuel tax of 3.5%, and an innovative "debt-for-nature" swap with the Dutch government so that money spent servicing foreign debt is switched directly to conservation projects.

Number two: "Heads above the parapet". We have to move away from a culture of accepting the leadership cadre that we have, as if it's immutable. Challenge and criticise sure, but put your own hand up too.

Making a contribution in the public realm should be regarded as a revolutionary act, as it will engender greater diversity and pluralism. Joining in as a duty in our new social contract.

Of course, all decision-makers should anchor themselves in values. We can't afford to lose sight of them, but there has to be a space between the ideological poles if we are to achieve and deliver for people. If doing, rather than saying, is to be the mantra of the new Wales, we will need to find honourable middle ways too and compromise can't be a dirty word.

Finally, "Shake off the Stockholm Syndrome". In my BBC Patrick Hannan lecture way back in 2015, I talked about Wales suffering from a crippling lack of self-confidence and ambition. The work of the Constitutional Commission has just proved to me how little most of the wider UK notices or indeed, cares about Wales.

Mind you, we make that pretty easy for them when we raise our voices in fury more about 20 miles per hour speed limits than about HS2? Remember, not an inch of HS2 track will run on Welsh soil. This means its dubious designation as an England-and-Wales project, coupled with an inadequate devolved funding settlement for railways could cost Wales five billion pounds.

Or what about the illogical exceptionalism that means Wales is a complete outlier in having a government, a parliament but no separate justice system? Nowhere else in the world thinks this is a viable or effective model of governance, yet the UK Government has treated former Lord Chief Justice, Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd - who provided a compelling case for reform - with a sneering contempt, with minimal engagement and, as far as I can see, no serious rationale.

All this suggests that new ways of thinking and doing are not a luxury, but an absolute necessity.

The extent to which the ideas I've presented tonight are perceived as moderate or revolutionary depends on one's perspective, but also the appetite for risk and opportunity. But the days of low risk and continuity are surely gone. Our economic outlook alone makes us a prime candidate for a more radical vision of the Wales we want. But we cannot cross our fingers and *will* this to happen. We need activism of thought and mind, of body and soul.

Which leaves us with the biggest question of all: how do we go about it? No modern democratic country has ever reinvented itself without some fundamental core ingredients:

- a genuine belief in itself that comes from expansive public education and lifelong citizen engagement.
- an agreed set of values that are immutable; these can form the basis for a vision and political purpose. Gareth Bale's "Wales, Golf, Madrid" was at least honest in its clarity of hierarchy and focus; maybe we could do with the same.
- and finally, a leadership cadre, diverse in profile and perspective, cognitively different, but united by the urgent need for action.

Tonight, I've offered my broadest possible analysis of politics and power; arguing for a new posture of confidence as we try to tackle the challenges facing Cymru. I've called for the reinvention of Wales, based on a shift in mindset.

Our impending Commission report could act as a blueprint to help frame the constitutional change necessary for the other improvements. Because constitutional change is part of the tool kit for a better Wales, not some self-indulgent project. There's a route to creating a more politically-literate citizenship within the new fit-for-purpose and more autonomous Wales that they deserve.

In it, people will have far more voice and agency and they take part, not just in elections but in civic life more generally. Taking on public and community roles - whatever they are - is normalised. And all of this would be embedded in a open culture of scrutiny and accountability - where there are no favourites, no monoliths politically, culturally or economically, one where pluralism and diversity in every sense is celebrated. The healthy turn over of leaders and representatives is voluntary and expected.

So, that's my vision and a direction of travel that I believe we need to take urgently. The journey to the next stage where I want us to be as a nation, to a globally mainstream Wales, freed from its trepidations and timidity, a confident, equal, prosperous Wales.

Diolch yn fawr iawn i chi.

ENDS.