

Backbench Business Committee

Representations: Backbench Business

Tuesday 24 January 2023

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Members present: Ian Mearns (Chair); Bob Blackman; Kevin Foster; Patricia Gibson; Chris Green; Nigel Mills; Kate Osborne.

Questions 1-3

Representations made

[I:](#) Carolyn Harris.

Carolyn Harris made representations.

Q1 **Chair:** Good afternoon and welcome to the Backbench Business Committee. We did have two applications on our agenda this afternoon, but one set of applicants has asked that their application be deferred. We therefore have one application in front of us this afternoon, which is from Carolyn Harris on the subject of St David's day.

Carolyn Harris: Thank you. I am asking that the Committee give permission for a Backbench Business Committee debate on St David's day—St David being the patron saint of Wales and St David's day being 1 March. The debate would be an opportunity for colleagues across the House to talk about not just the political environment in Wales, but the cultural and sporting—we can mention Gareth Bale and his recent retirement, for example. It would be an opportunity for Welsh colleagues to discuss Welsh, the importance of Wales in the Union, and how important it is for us to be the voice of Wales in Westminster.

Chair: Thank you. Any questions, colleagues?

Q2 **Bob Blackman:** Can I just raise one question, if I may? I notice that your application, which is clearly in order and has a large number of speakers willing to participate, does not have any Welsh Conservative colleagues. Have you approached them? Have they refused? What has happened?

Carolyn Harris: Yes, I did approach them, but it appears that they were also trying to get their own debate on St David's day, so they declined to sign our application. I understand, however, that they have not been able to get the numbers.

Bob Blackman: Okay.

Q3 **Chair:** I understand that a number of the Conservative Members who have signed it are originally from Wales, but represent English constituencies.

Carolyn Harris: They certainly are; one is from Barry.

Chair: They like to spread the joy, absolutely.

Carolyn Harris: I am happy for anyone to be Welsh, if only for a short time.

Chair: Any further questions? No. In that case, Carolyn, thank you very much. That concludes our public deliberations.