



Votes at 16

Submission to the Welsh Government's consultation on Electoral Reform in Local Government

Mick Antoniw, Assembly Member for Pontypridd



Votes at 16

Submission to the Welsh Government's
consultation on Electoral Reform in Local
Government

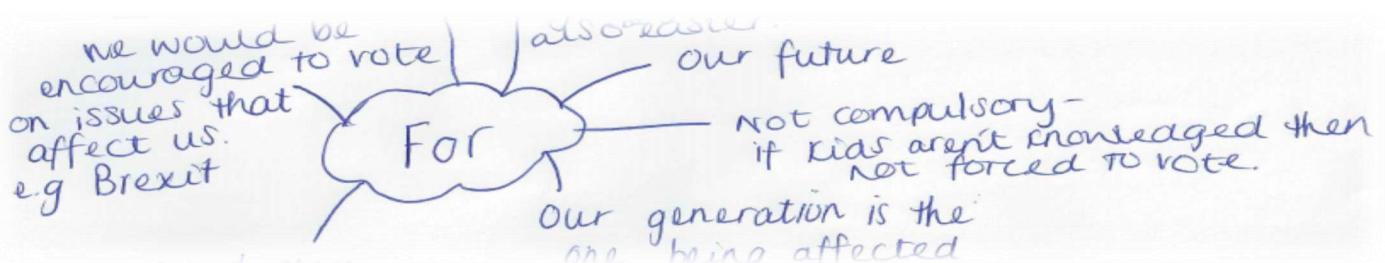
Mick Antoniw
Assembly Member for Pontypridd

I am a long-standing supporter of the voting age being lowered to 16. My views are based on the belief that i) those individuals who pay income tax should not be excluded from the democratic process, which sets and regulates taxes, and ii) that at 16, individuals are perfectly capable of making decisions that affect their future and that of the wider community.

In making my submission however, I wanted to ensure that my views were representative of the age group that would be directly affected by the proposed change. To test this I held consultation events at Bryn Celynnog and Y Pant high schools in my constituency.

Around 100 pupils, aged 16 and 17 participated in the debate sessions. Students were split into groups and asked to argue either 'for' or 'against' reducing the voting age. I was encouraged that the overwhelming majority of students (76%) were in favour of lowering the voting age.

Interestingly, in one group, where students were asked to vote both before and after the debate, the proportion of students voting 'for' increased from 66% to 80%.



The key themes in favour of reducing the voting age were:

It is fundamentally unfair that people cannot vote at 16 when they have/can have other 'adult responsibilities'.

This was a feature of each group's feedback with the following comments being typical: 'Unfair for older people to decide young people's future.' 'It's our future but we are denied a vote.' 'No vote for our generation means no change for our futures.' '[There aren't] many ways for our voice to be heard.' 'How can we not be [given the] vote when older generations are? They have different views [to us].' 'Adults vote on policies that affect them but don't always care about policies that affect our generation.'

A number of groups cited Brexit (where 16 and 17 year olds had no vote) and the Scottish Independence Referendum (where, in Scotland 16 and 17 year olds did vote) as issues that are fundamentally about the 'future' and where their voice needed to be heard.

A number of groups drew attention to the inconsistency of allowing 16 year olds to pay taxes, get married and join the army whilst not being allowed to vote. During the debate this view developed with for example, the differentiation within the minimum/living wage (which is lower for young people) being identified as unfair.

Increased participation by young people would encourage political parties to develop policies on the issues that affect young people.

There was a recognition that those sections of society that engaged in the democratic process are more likely attract attention from political parties, with the recent focus on policies for 'older people' cited most often.

Voting at sixteen encourages interest in politics at an early age.

A number of groups highlighted the benefits of voting at 16 in developing the 'habit' of voting, developing an interest in democracy, 'modernising' politics and making young people more independent.

A further interesting observation is that voting could help to change the negative ['not interested'] stereotype surrounding teenagers.



The key themes against reducing the voting age were:

16 year olds have insufficient knowledge of politics and the political process.

This was a view that was also recognised by those groups in favour of lowering the voting age. The majority of students felt that providing political education in schools would be either desirable or necessary. When asked for voting intentions if a commitment to provide appropriate political education in school was in place the proportion of students supporting a voting age reduction increased from 80% to 100%

Young people are more susceptible to 'negative influence'.

Fears were expressed about undue influence from parents, peers and radical groups. The potential negative role of social media in influencing political views was also identified. A number of groups thought that a 'lack of knowledge about politics' was the main reason why they may be negatively influenced, but most acknowledged that 'lack of knowledge' could be equally applied to many adults.

16 and 17 year olds may not make the effort to vote.

Views on why young people may not vote included: 'politics is not relevant to them and/or that it is boring', 'Youth turnout is already low', 'young people may vote for 'joke' parties' and 'the novelty of voting will wear off.' The current voting system was also cited by one group as a reason why 16 and 17 years olds may not vote. However, both those 'for' and 'against' agreed that online voting needs to be introduced in order to maximise engagement.

Reducing the voting age may be a 'slippery slope.'

One group argued that by lowering voting to 16 it was only a matter of time before there was a push to lower it further. In the same vein, it was also suggested that by establishing 16 as 'adulthood' this would mean for example, a move to lower the age at which alcohol could be purchased.

Summary

Without exception the students engaged in the debates in an enthusiastic and thoughtful way. Their views were expressed with great clarity and conviction. The experience reinforced my view of that at 16 and 17, young people are absolutely competent and (in most cases) willing to have a say in the decisions that affect their lives. I also remain convinced that it fundamentally unfair that those who pay tax do not have a say. As a result, I remain firmly in favour of reducing the voting age to 16.

However, the consultations have clearly identified that any reduction in the voting age **must** go hand-in-hand with the provision of appropriate political education, delivered in the classroom from as early as age 14. Without this commitment I do not believe that the voting age reduction can be the success that I, and the majority of the students who participated, would want it to be.

Mick Antoniw

Assembly Member for Pontypridd

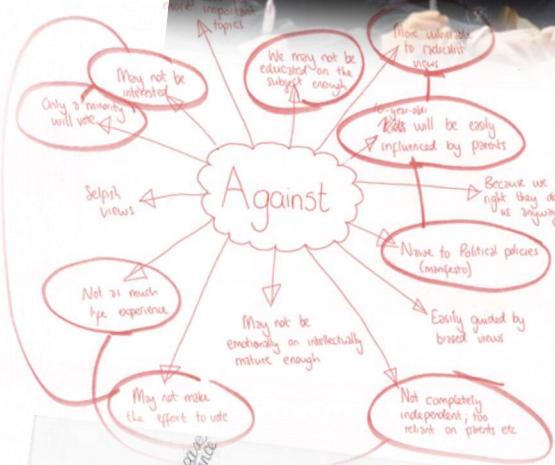


For:

- If a vote was made when we were 16, we have to wait 2 years after we are 18 until it changes - it effects us.
- We are a more modernistic view than the older generation.
- The money issues will effect us more as we are going into University/working world.
- Scottish Referendum.
- You can die for your country but cannot vote for your country.
- We are the future.
- Without a vote, we have no say.
- Even though you have the right to vote, you don't have to vote.
- give chance to people who will.
- Lots of adults don't know enough about it.
- Uni students doing politics have never had the right to vote.
- Adults vote on policies that affect them but don't really care.
- I have to think about policies that directly affect our generation.
- In sequence of other policies.
- Democracy = everyone is given the vote.
- all views considered.

At 16, not being able to vote should naturally fit this generation. People interested in politics would look into politics and directly affect us.

think about policies & how they affect us.



* Could say kids aren't knowledgeable but other ages aren't either.

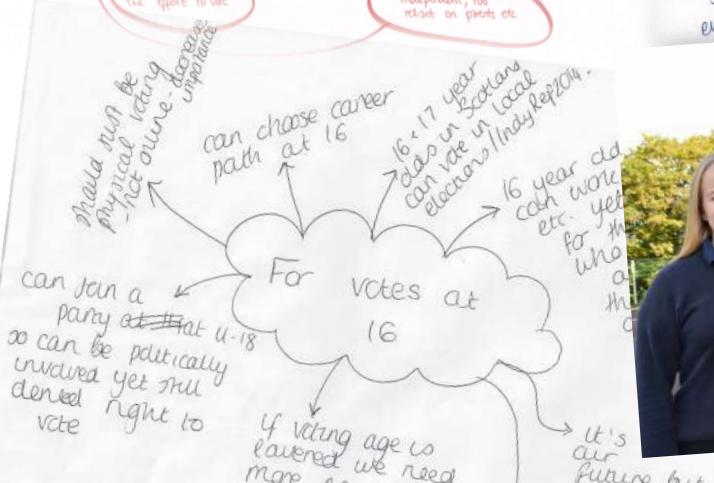
We would be encouraged to vote on issues that affect us. e.g. Brexit

online voting would appeal to young people and also easier.

For
our future
Not compulsory - if kids aren't knowledgeable then not forced to vote.

Our generation is the one being affected
Need more education
different websites and videos.
non-bias
we are very interested but don't have the option to learn about it.
If schools teach it then through the generations, everyone will understand.

University fees
Travelling
Working minimum wage



Hoffwn ddiolch i'r myfyrwyr yn ysgol Uwchradd Bryn Celynog ac Ysgol Uwchradd Y Pant am eu cyfraniad gwerthfawr, ac i'r penaethiaid chweched dosbarth, Kristy Thomas a Sara Nowell, am drefnu'r sesiynau.

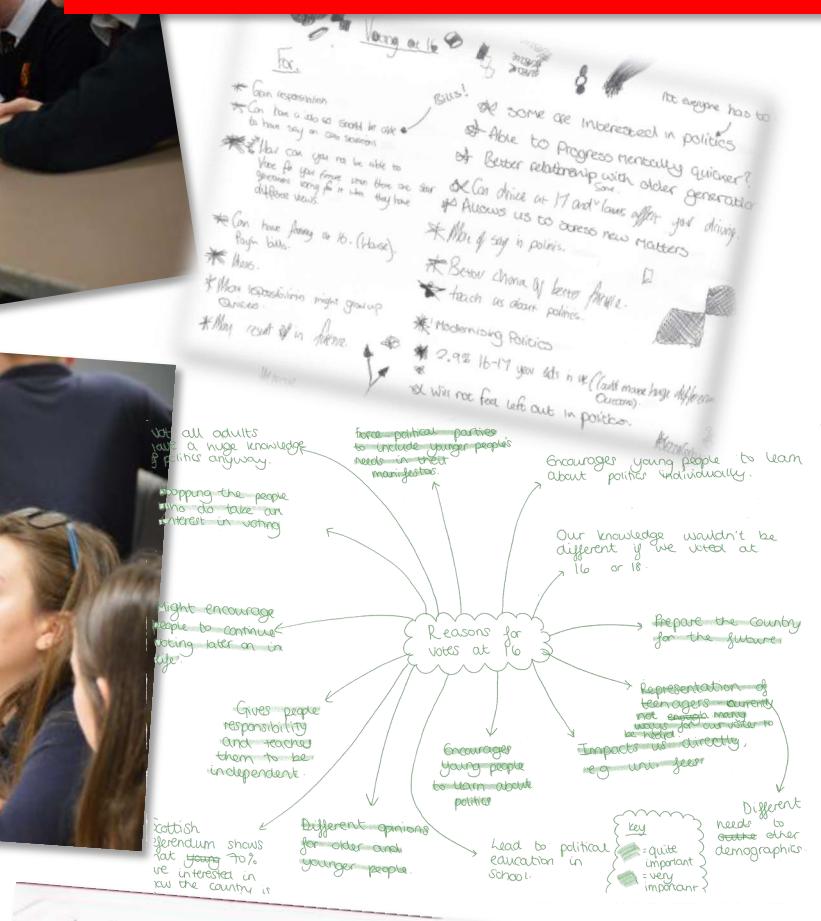
I would like to thank the students at Bryn Celynog and Y Pant schools for their valuable input and to their sixth form heads, Kristy Thomas and Sara Nowell for arranging the sessions.





Bu myfyrwyr yn gweithio mewn grwpiau i greu dadleuon o blaid ac yn erbyn gostwng yr oedran pleidleisio.

Students worked in groups to produce arguments for and against reducing the voting age.



For

- * It's our future so if we ~~are~~ able to do GCSE's which affects our future we should have a vote on our future.
 - * Change the stereotype ~~been~~ surrounding teenagers.
 - * Incorporating into Welsh Dacc
 - We would be more likely to vote if we had ~~more~~ a better understanding
 - Voting should be both online and ballot.
 - * Education, Health — In the future if we need it.
 - University costs
 - future careers.
 - * We will be more aware of what is going on in the UK.
 - We will be more aware of what is going on in the UK.

Drawbacks

- Not educated or immature.
There are immature adults
and/or Social media

FOR

- * Can fight for country
 - * Can get married.
 - * Do not want to fall behind other countries in voting system - equality
 - * Some 16 year olds are more mature than adults
 - (*) Can get a job at 16.
 - * As long as 16 year olds are educated, they should be able to vote
 - * Can pay tax
 - * 16 year olds have to pay adult prices anyway
 - * Encourages the grandparents to vote - the younger generation to vote
 - (*) Prevents the older generations deciding for the younger generation. like Brexit.
 - * No vote for ~~us~~ our generation means no change for our future.

Against

- School curriculum doesn't facilitate it - not engaged with politics
- A lot of young ppl aren't interested in politics - boring to them.
- They don't think it will affect them, have a big impact on them.
- Youth turnout is already low, even with 18 yr olds. Young people hardly turn out. 18 & 19 will not really make a difference.
- They could vote 'joke' parties.
- Election speeches aren't really aimed at young ppl
- Traditional voting system isn't attractive for young ppl.
Independent voter participation
- Lack of understanding about the workings of the Welsh assembly.
- Influence of peer pressure - leaving less of social media - effect the opinions and decisions of leading people - opinion that can't change.



Micik Antoniw, Aelod Cyngwiliad dros Bontriwbidiad

Fodd bynnag, mae'r Ymgynghorriadau wedi nodi'n glir bod **rhaid** i unrhyw ostyngiad yn yr oedran pleidleisio fynd law yn llaw a darpariaeth addysg wleidyddol briodol, a ddarperir yn yr Ystafell ddogsbart o 14 oed ym Mae. Heb yr Ymrwyddiad hwn, ni chredaf y gall gostwng yr oedran pleidleisio fod mor llwyddiannus ag y byddwn i, a'r rhian fwyaf o'r myfyrwyr a gymerodd ran, am iddo fod.

Fodd bynnag, mae'r Ymgynghorriadau wedi nodi'n glir bod **rhaid** i unrhyw ostyngiad yn yr oedran pleidleisio fynd law yn llaw a darpariaeth addysg wleidyddol briodol, a ddarperir yn yr Ystafell ddogsbart o 16 oed. Ford bynnag, mae'r Ymgynghorriadau wedi nodi'n glir bod **rhaid** i unrhyw ostyngiad yn yr oedran pleidleisio fynd law yn llaw a darpariaeth addysg wleidyddol briodol, a ddarperir yn yr Ystafell ddogsbart o 16 oed sy'n talu tr ethi yn cael dwued eu dwued. O ganlyniad, rwy'n gadafn o blaid gostwng yr oedran pleidleisio i adau sy'n effeithio ar eu bywydau. Rwyf wedi fy argyhoedd i hefyd ei bod hi'n gwbl anheg nad yw'r rhai 16 ac 17 oed yn gwbl gydwys ac (yn y rhian fwyaf o achosion) yn barod i fynegi eu barn ar y penedffyni-wyd eu safbwyntau mewnw ffordd glir a phenasant. Roedd y profiad yn cadarnhau fy man bod pobl i fianc yn ddiethriad, cymerodd y myfyrwyr ran yn y trafodaethau mewnw ffordd frwdfrydig a meddygar. Mynegg-

Crynodeb

Roedd un grwp yn dadau y byddai gostwng yr oedran pleidleisio i 16 oed yn goylgu mai dim ond mater o amser fyddai hi cyn i ni weld galwad i'w oedd ymhlach. Yn yr un modd, awgrymwyd y byddai sefydlu 16 oed fel dechrau oedolau, oedolau, yn goylgu, er enghraifft, galwad i oedd yr oedran prynu alcohol.

Gall gostwng yr oedran pleidleisio fod yn llywyr llithrifig,

cylwyno pleidleisio ar-lein er mwyn cynyddu cyfranogiad.

16 ac 17 oed yn pleidleisio. Nododd un grwp fod y system bleidleisio presennol yn rhestrwm pam na fyddai pobl barod, efallai y bydd pobl ifanc yn pleidleisio dros bleidiau joc, bydd cyffro'r profiad newydd o gael ddim yn bwysig iddyn nhw a/neu mae'n ddiol, maen y bobl ifanc sy'n pleidleisio yn isel iawn yn Roedd rhesymau pam na fyddai pobl ifanc yn pleidleisio yn cynwys y canlynol: dydy gwliedyddiateb

Efallai na fydd pobl ifanc 16 ac 17 oed yn gwnaed yr Ymdrech i bleidleisio.

berthnasol i lawer o oedolion hefyd.

ryw o grwpiau o'r farn mai, diffyg gwybodaeth am wleidyddiateb, oedd y prif reswm pam y gallent fod yn negyddol cyfrannau cyndebithau o ran dylanwadu ar safbwyntau gwleidyddol ei nodi hefyd. Roedd am-Mynegwyd pryderon yngylch dylanwad gormodol gan rieni, cymhiriad a grwpiau radical. Cafodd rof deslun dylanwad negyddol, ond cydnabu'r rhian fwyaf fod, diffyg gwybodaeth, yn gallu bod yr un mor

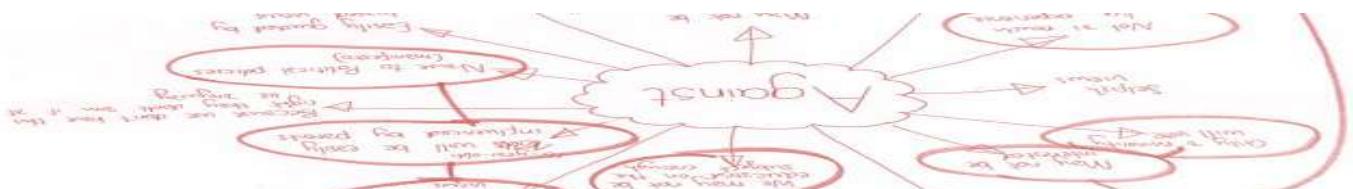
Mae pobl ifanc yn fwy agored i addylau negyddol;

oeddran pleidleisio yn cynyddu o 80% i 100%

ddarparu addysg wleidyddol briodol yn yr ysgol ar waith, roedd cyfran y myfyrwyr sy'n cefnogi gostwng yr pleidleisio. Roedd y rhian fwyaf yn teimlo y byddai darparu addysg wleidyddol mewnw ysgolion nail a'i'n ddymuol neu'n angenrhediol. Pan olynnyd am fwriadau pleidleisio, os oedd ymrymiaid i Roedd hwn yn safbwynt a gydnabuwyd hefyd gan y grwpiau hynni sydd o blaid gostwng yr oedran

Nid oes gan pobl ifanc 16 oed addysg o wybodaeth am wleidyddiateb a'r broses wleidyddol.

Dyma oedd y themâu allweddol yn erbyn gostwng yr oedran pleidleisio:



sylitedig a phobl ifanc yn eu harddegeau.

Sylw diddorol arall yw galli pleidleisio helpu i newid y stereotefip negyddol ('dim diddordeb') sy'n gy-

didderdeb mewm democratieth, moderneddio, gwleidyddiatech a gwneud pobl ifanc yn fwy annibynnol.

Nododd amryw o grwpiau fawtisio pliediesio yn 16 oed o ran datblygu'r arfer, o bleidiesio, datblygu

Mae pliediesio yn 16 oed yn annog didderdeb mewm gwleidyddiatech o oedran ifanc.

cael ei nodi fwyaf.

fwy tebygo! o ddenu sylw pliediau gwleidyddol, gyda'r ffocws diweddar ar bolesiau ar gyfer, pobl hyn, yn Roedd Yna gydnabwyddiatech bod y rhannau hynny o gymdeithas sy'n rhann o'r broses democratioedd yn

terion sy'n effeithio ar pobl ifanc.

Byddai myw o gyfranogaidd gan pobl ifanc yn annog pliediau gwleidyddol! addatygu polisiau ar y ma-

fel efen anheneb.

enghraifft, y whanianteth rhwng yr isafswm cyflög/cyflög byw (sy'n is ar gyfer pobl ifanc) yn cael ei nodi ymuno â'r fyddin, ond eu hatal rhag pliediesio. Yn ystod y drafodaeth, datblygodd y farn hon gydag, er

Tyunodd amryw o grwpiau sylw at yr anghysoundeb o ganiatâu i pobl ifanc 16 oed dalu tr ethi, priodi ac

ymwneud â'r dyfodol, a bod angen i'w llais gael ei glywed.

Annybaniadeth yr Alban (lle caffodd pobl ifanc 16 ac 17 oed yn yr Alban bleidiesio) yn faterion sy'n dywedodd amryw o grwpiau fod Brexit (lle na chaffodd pobl ifanc 16 ac 17 oed bleidiesio) a Refferendum

ponei am bolesiau sy'n effeithio ar ein cenhedlatech ni!

i ni, Mae oedoliwn yn pliediesio ar bolesiau sy'n effeithio arnynt nhyd yn nhw ond dydyn nhw ddiwm wastad yn pliediesio, ond bod y cenedlaethau hyn yn cael gwneud hynny? Mae ganddynt nhw whanoli safbwyantrau

newid ein dyfodol ni, Dydyn ni ddiwm yn cael digon o gyfe i fyngi ein barn, 'Pam nad ydyn ni'n cael

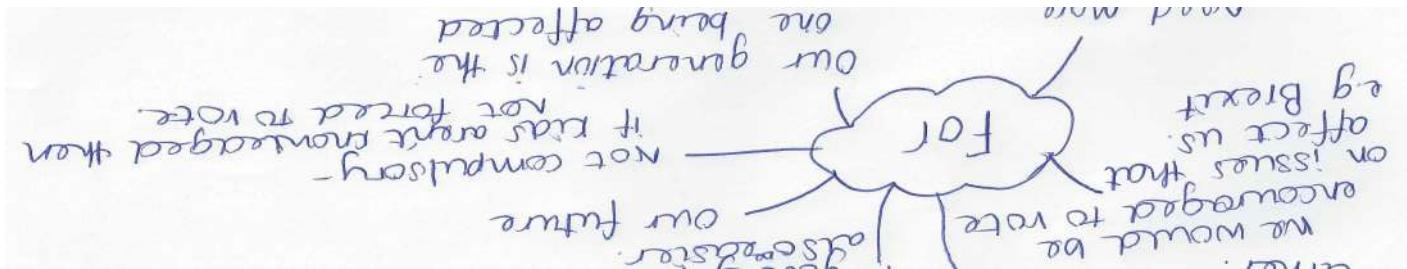
ni ddiwm yn cael pliediesio, 'Mae'r ffait nad oes gan ein cenhedlaeth ni bleidlais yn goolygu na allwn

Mae'n anheneb bod pobl hyn yn penderynu ar dyfodol pobl ifanc, 'Ein dyfodol ni yw ydyw, ond dydyn

Roedd yr ymateb hwn yn nodweddiaol o adborth pob grwp, a chafwyd sylwadau tebyg i'r canlynol:

Mae'n anheneb na all pobl bleidiesio yn 16 oed, er bod ganddynt nhw, gyfrifoldebau eraill, fel oedoliwn.

Dyma oedd y themâu allweddol o blaid goswng yr oedran pliediesio:



myfyrwr a bleidiesiodd o blaid, o 66% ! 80%.

Mewm un grwp, lle gofynnwyd i fyfyrwr bleidiesio cyn ac ar ol y drafodaeth, cynddodd cyfran y

ealoniongoel gweld bod y rhannau fwyaf o'r myfyrwr (76%) o blaid goswng yr oedran pliediesio.

Cymroedd tua 100 o ddisgyblion 16 ac 17 oed ran yn y sesiynau. Cafoedd y myfyrwr eu rhannu'n grwpiau a gofynnwyd iddyn nhw ddadlau, o blaid, neu, yn erbyn, goswng yr oedran pliediesio. Roedd hi'n

ddigwyddiadau ymgynghori yn Ysgol Uwchradd Bryn Celynnoedd ac Ysgol Uwchradd y Pant yn fy etholaeth.

oedran a fyddai'n cael ei effeithio'n uniongyrchol gan y newid arfaethedig hwn. I brofi hyn, cynhaliai

Wrth wneud fy nghylwyniad, fod bynnag, roeddwn i eisiau sicrhau bod fy marn yn cynrychioli'r grwp

penderyniadau sy'n effeithio ar eu dyfodol nhw a dyfodol y gymuned ehangach.

sy'n gosod a rheoleiddio tr ethi, ac ii) yn 16 oed, bod unigolion yn ddigon galluog i allu gwneud

grëd i) na ddyli'r unigolion hynny sy'n talu tr eth incwm gael eu cadw allan o'r broses democratioedd,

Rwy'n gefnogwyr brwd o'r ymgrych i oswng yr oedran pliediesio i 16 oed. Mae fy marn yn seiliedig ar y

Aelod Cyngiliad dras Bonypridd
Mick Antoniw
Cylwyniad i ymgynghoriad Llywodraeth Cymru
ar Ddiwygio Etholiadol mewm Llywodraeth Leol

Pleidleisio yn 16 oed



Mick Antoniw, Aelod Cyngiliad dros Bonypridd

adol mewn Lywodraeth Leol

Cyflwyniad i ymgynghoriad Lywodraeth Cymru ar Ddiwygio Etholi-

Pleidleisio yn 16 oed

