

# Demonstrators vent their anger



ANGRY parents demonstrated against a local authority's plan to cut funding to Welsh language pre-schools.

Mums, toddlers and Cylch Meithrin staff from

Felinheli handed in a petition, carried banners and shouted slogans urging Gwynedd Council to rethink its plan to save £250,000 from its education budget by reorganising its pre-school provision.

The demonstrators came to the council's headquarters in Caernarfon last Thursday as councillors attended a workshop which could decide the future of much of the Meithrin movement across the county.

If the proposal is adopted it could mean that 50 out of 70 Welsh language pre-school groups may be forced to close their doors.

Similar petitions were handed over to councillors across Gwynedd, with council leader Dyfed Edwards picking up a petition in person from the Cylch Meithrin in Groeslon.

Speaking outside the council office in Caernarfon, Felinheli mother-of-two Jo Powell expressed her fear that her children's education would suffer.

She said: "I'm an English speaker so the Welsh language education that the Cylch provides for my children is very important to me and invaluable to them."

"I also think it is wrong to even consider putting

children aged three into a formal school environment."

Another mum who attended the protest, Siwsan Jones, hit out at the suggestion that the funding cut would make a saving in real terms.

"I think the (Felinheli) Cylch is really very cheap for the service it provides and the benefits it brings. For £7,000 a year it provides a brilliant introduction to the schooling system for young children.

"Last year we had 45 children on the roll and employed five people, and although we do a lot of fundraising ourselves, that is great value for money."

"I put two of my children through Cylch and I think it would be madness if we lost this to save such a relatively small amount of money."

Felinheli Cylch Meithrin leader Lynne Parry added: "There has been so much opposition to this proposal. Hundreds have signed our petition, from parents to grandparents and people who don't have any children at all. We receive such great support because people see us as a real community resource."

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[alex.hickey@northwalesnews.co.uk](mailto:alex.hickey@northwalesnews.co.uk)