

Two notable events have heartened me considerably this week: The announcement that the neurosurgery unit at Morriston Hospital is saved; and the inaugural meeting of the Assembly's Petitions Committee.

Both moves I believe signal the kind of forward-looking and progressive politics that we in Wales can build together – and the announcement on Morriston neurosurgery especially highlights how effective Plaid Cymru can be as a party of government.

Saving the neurosurgery and opening up the political process for the good of the people were central elements of Plaid's election campaign last May, and the unit is now safe.

The Petitions Committee is charged with considering petitions submitted by the public on a range of issues that fall within the Assembly's remit. I am hopeful that our fledgling committee will add a new dimension to our democracy.

I would urge and encourage members of the public who feel strongly about a certain issue to consider using this new mechanism; this is your opportunity to influence the democratic process directly.

The future democratic process in Wales will be decided this weekend. Both Plaid and Labour will convene special conferences to decide whether to enter into coalition with one another.

I hope that in next week's edition of the *Bridgend Post* you will be reading news of how the new coalition government looks, and how the progressive elements of Welsh politics are putting their differences aside for the good of Wales.

Recent moves on the part of the Government of Wales have been encouraging. They have announced a review of the Barnett Formula – the formula that is used to calculate how much money the Assembly has to spend on key public services such as health and education.

I have long advocated a fairer, needs-based system for funding, so that our most deprived areas have the resources they need to combat social exclusion and the other cancers of poverty.

I am especially pleased to see the elimination of market forces in our health services – a central commitment of the *One Wales* document produced by Plaid and Labour groups in the Assembly. This will mean public services in public hands, rather than being at the mercy of the private sector. It means delivering world-class healthcare centred on the needs of the patient.

Such issues must be considered carefully by all attending the respective party conferences over the weekend. We cannot allow tribal differences to deny the people of Wales the stability and direction that they seek from their government.

One thing is certain: Plaid Cymru has emerged from the elections as a responsible party of government. It is Plaid that is the driving force of progressive Welsh politics.

The *One Wales* document sets out our joint vision of a fair, prosperous and confident Wales. It is, in my opinion, the basis for a stable and purposeful government, which we all yearn for. After weeks of uncertainty, it is surely time for us all to embrace this historic opportunity, for the good of Wales.