

John Griffiths AC /AM
Y Gweinidog Diwylliant a Chwaraeon
Minister for Culture and Sport



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-476
Ein cyf/Our ref JG/00977/13

William Powell AM
AM for Mid & West Wales
Chair Petitions committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

committeebusiness@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Dear William

8 August 2013

Thank you for your letter of 7 May regarding PCS' petition about Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales' plans to restructure the organisation.

The response to the petition shows the very high regard in which the public holds the Museum and the contribution it makes to our cultural life, and the tourism industry in Wales.

The public sector is going through an unprecedented period of budgetary pressure and the Welsh Government has seen its overall grant from Westminster reduced. There are inevitably knock-on effects for the bodies we ourselves fund and many difficult decisions to be made. Amgueddfa Cymru has received a virtually standstill budget in 2013-14 when compared with 2012-13. This compares very favourably with equivalent bodies in England, where national museums funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport have been subject to 15% revenue cuts in recent years, with further reductions announced just before Christmas. The Welsh Government is seeking to protect spending on culture, heritage in contrast to expenditure cuts elsewhere in the UK.

Nevertheless, Amgueddfa Cymru like all organisations must make some savings to its operational budget in order for it to continue to thrive and prosper in the future. The Museum estimates it needs to make savings of £2.5million over the next 2-3 years. Amgueddfa Cymru's budget on staffing, and staff costs will continue to rise as contractual incremental payments are made. Staff costs account for 80% of their overall budget. It is Amgueddfa Cymru's view that the only way to close this budget deficit is to reduce staffing costs. I have received reassurance from the senior management of the Museum that there is a continuing commitment to avoid compulsory redundancies as far as possible.

In May 2013 the Museum released its revised staffing structure following the 90 day statutory consultation period, which will see around 22 posts lost, mostly through voluntary redundancy. This contrasts with the 35 posts lost in the draft structure released in January 2013.

The proposed changes to the staffing structure are designed to support the Museum's strategic objectives and ensure the organisation can continue operating its family of seven world-class museums. Amgueddfa Cymru's long-term priorities include the creation of a National Museum of Natural Sciences at the Cathays site. This latter project is at the planning stage and will follow on from the current redevelopment work at St Fagans, and follows on from the highly successful National Museum of Art development, also at Cathays. The proposed changes to the staffing structure are designed to support these strategic objectives.

I would like to thank you for writing to me on this issue.

Yours,
John

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