



Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru  
Arts Council of Wales

Friday, 20 October 2017

David J Rowlands AM  
Chair  
Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff CF99 1NA

*Dear Mr Rowlands*

Petition P-05-776:

To recognize the three hundredth anniversary of Williams Pantycelyn

Thank you for your letter of 18 October on the above.

I was interested to read the submission from your petitioner. It is a most eloquent testimonial on behalf of a significant figure in Welsh history.

You asked for information on three matters and I'll respond to each in turn.

1. *Were there any events or activities held during 2017 to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the birth of William Williams?*

I'm not aware of any events held during 2017. Commemorative events are not usually supported by the Arts Council as these tend to fall within the remit of the museums sector or activities funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund in Wales.

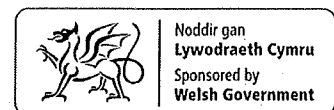
We have, in exceptional circumstances, supported commemorative projects, but these are always in response to major projects either initiated by the Welsh Government or undertaken in partnership with them. (See 2 below.)

2. *If not, what consideration was given to marking this milestone during the year?*

I'm not aware of any discussions about marking the milestone. The Arts Council has been involved in a small number of commemorative projects. Our remit is principally to encourage people to enjoy and take part in the living arts. In other words, work which is current and of the moment.

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Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg, ni fydd gohebu drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.  
We welcome correspondences in Welsh and English, corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay.

Examples of the type of project we support would include:

- the plays, projects and events that we helped to commission as part of the Dylan Thomas 100 Festival
- Cardiff's record-breaking public celebration of Roald Dahl's "James and the Giant Peach" (promoted by the Wales Millennium Centre and National Theatre Wales)
- National Theatre Wales' production of Owen Sheers' "Mametz" as part of the First World War Commemorations

I notice from the Committee meeting transcript that it was suggested that:

"...these matters are governed by the Arts Council of Wales, and it's up to them to submit funding requests if they feel it's appropriate."

This isn't quite correct. We don't submit funding requests to the Welsh Government for individual projects or events. We do receive annual grant-in-aid funding from the Welsh Government for our overall activities, as well as funding from the National Lottery.

We support artists and arts organisations through our funding programmes, but any applications for support would have to meet our overall criteria. We wouldn't initiate commemorative events ourselves. However, we would work with the Welsh Government, where appropriate, to assist in their promotion of cultural events that have ambitious cultural, social and economic objectives. The three projects highlighted above are examples of that approach.

*3. My views on the proposals made by the petitioner*

I offer no additional comment on the significance and cultural standing of William Williams. This is amply covered in the petitioner's submission.

I'm aware that major commemorative events take a considerable amount of organisation. (Both the Dylan Thomas and First World War Commemorations were some three years in the planning.) It would therefore be challenging, I fear, to mount any event of significance in what remains of 2017.

I'm not able to comment on the proposal to reallocate any funds that might have been set aside for the so-called "Ring of Iron" public art project. Funds were identified from within specific Welsh Government budgets, and I'm not sure how easily these could be reallocated.

*Yours sincerely,  
Nick Capaldi*

Nick Capaldi  
Chief Executive

