



Gardd Fotaneg
Genedlaethol Cymru
National Botanic
Garden of Wales

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Chief Executive Office
Swyddfa Y Prif Weithredwr

Strictly Private & Confidential

Janet Davies AM
Chair of Audit Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

24th November 2005 / 24^{ain} Tachwedd 2005

Dear Janet,

Response to the Wales Audit Office / Ymateb i Adroddiad Y Swyddfa Archwilio

I enclose information which may be of interest to you as a response to the Report of the Auditor General published today.

1. Statement to the Press.
2. Briefing as background and our response to the Report.
3. Letter from the Trustees to the Auditor General.

The Garden has developed considerably and works hand in hand with our Stakeholders who support us. With the commitment of our hard working Staff and Volunteers we have a great confidence in the future.

If you would like any further information, please let me know.

Amgaeaf wybodaeth fydd efallai o ddiddordeb i chi mewn ymateb i'r adroddiad gan Yr Archwilydd Cyffredinol a gyhoeddwyd heddiw.

1. Ein datganiad i'r cyfryngau.
2. Gwybodaeth fel cefndir a'n hymateb ni i'r adroddiad.
3. Llythyr oddi wrth yr Ymddiriedolwyr i'r Archwilydd Cyffredinol.

Mae'r Ardd wedi datblygu'n aruthrol ac yn gweithio law yn llaw gyda'r cyrff allweddol sy'n ein cefnogi. Gydag ymrwymiad ein staff a gwirfoddolwyr gweithgar mae gennym hyder mawr yn ein dyfodol.

Os hoffech unrhyw wybodaeth ychwanegol gennyf, yna gadewch i mi wybod.

*If you would like a further briefing before
1st of December please let me know.*

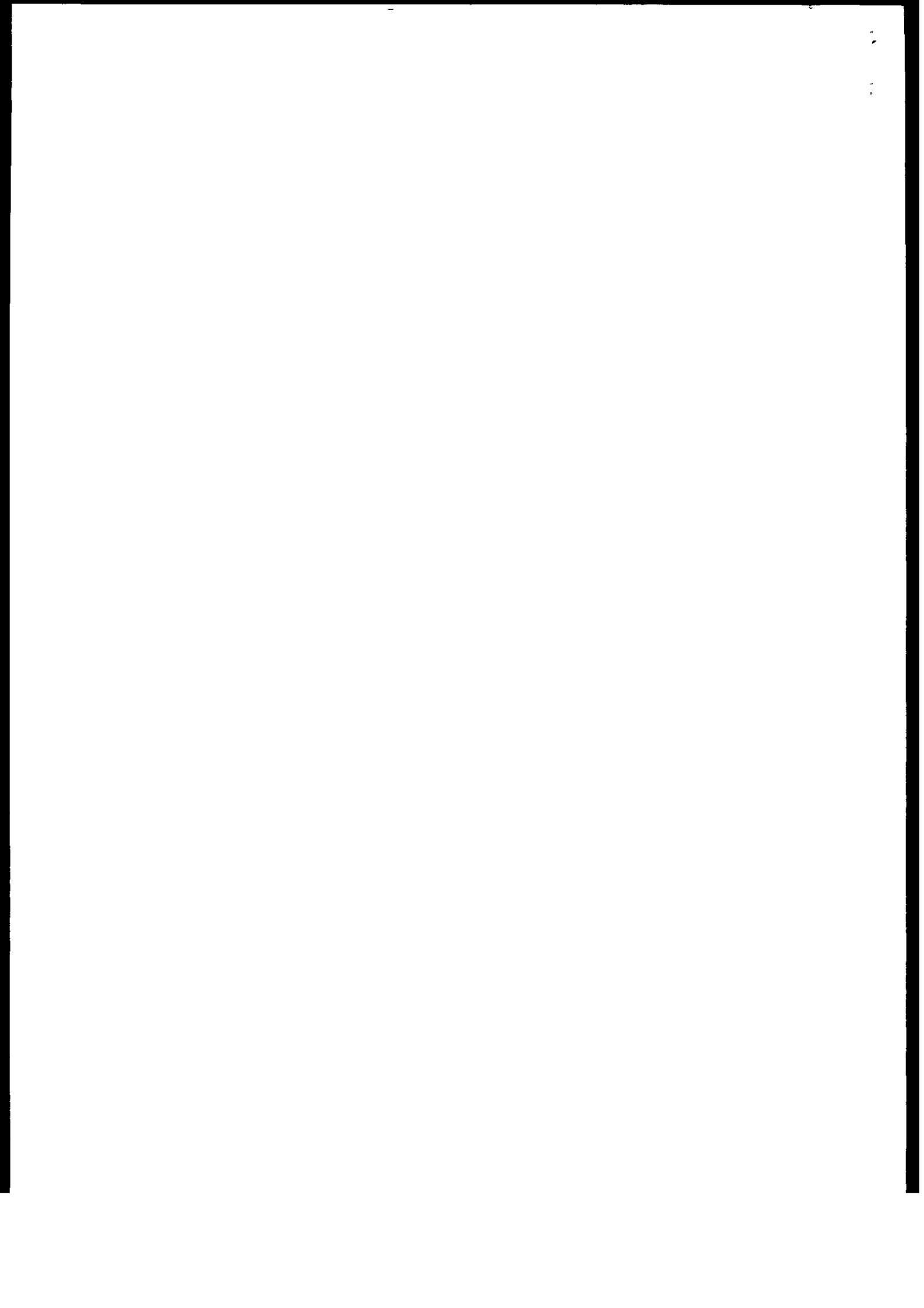
Roy J. Thomas *We look forward to greeting you.*

*Yours sincerely,
R.J.*

Mae Gardd Fotaneg Genedlaethol Cymru yn gwmni cyfyngedig trwy warant. Wedi ei chofrestru yng Nghymru, rhif 2909098 ac fel Elusen gofrestredig rhif 1036354

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Embargo: 00:01 Thursday 24 November 2005

**Response by the National Botanic Garden of Wales to the
Auditor General's Report**

The National Botanic Garden of Wales welcomes the publication of the Wales Audit Office Report into the funding of the project. The report refers to a period in the Garden's history, which was widely reported at the time. Significant progress has been made since then as part of a comprehensive recovery programme in partnership with the Welsh Assembly Government, the Millennium Commission and Carmarthenshire County Council, which is providing a firm foundation for future success. Highlights include:

1. The Board has appointed seven new trustees which has significantly strengthened the overall strategic management of the Garden.
2. The trading targets have been met or exceeded.
3. Visitor numbers are up-August & October this year were the best since 2001.
4. A new chief executive's office has been established in order to strengthen internal management and an interim Chief Executive Officer has been appointed to oversee the creation of this new management structure.
5. The marketing and communications department is being strengthened to focus on marketing the Garden.
6. A new working partnership agreement with the Welsh Assembly Government and Carmarthenshire County Council is in place.
7. An additional £1.3M grant was recently announced from the Millennium Commission for new capital enhancements.
8. Other initiatives include the appointment of the world-renowned, New York-based Welsh Architect, John Belle, to design a new Tropical Glasshouse within the Double Walled Garden.

9. Work to complete the Science Centre is ongoing and NBGW is in detailed discussions with the Welsh Assembly Government, the WDA and Swansea University on the future development of the centre as a "BioTechnium".

10. Further private investment will be announced in the near future.

The Garden's interim chief executive, Roy J. Thomas, said:

"Let us not forget that the Garden opened on time in May 2000 and on budget. The Garden has developed enormously within a short space of time and is recognised the world over as a Millennium project of global significance. We would not have been able to take these massive strides forward without the dedication and commitment of our staff and volunteers. We've had a great year in which we celebrated our fifth birthday and our close working partnership with our stakeholders is providing us with great confidence for the future."

-Ends-

For further information please contact 01558 667148

-ends-

Notes to editors

- The National Botanic Garden of Wales, the first botanic garden of the new Millennium is situated ¼ mile from the A48 dual carriageway in Carmarthenshire, South West Wales, midway between Cross Hands and Carmarthen.
- www.gardenofwales.org.uk
- Tel. 01558 667148
- The Garden is open every day except Christmas Day. Winter opening times are 10am – 4.30pm with last admission at 3.30pm.
- The National Botanic Garden of Wales is supported by the Welsh Assembly Government and Carmarthenshire County Council.
- The National Botanic Garden of Wales is a landmark Millennium project, of which the core construction and development phases were enabled through a £22.25M grant from the Millennium Commission.

National Botanic Gardens of Wales

Background information and response to the Auditor General's Report "Funding for the National Botanic Gardens of Wales"

This note is intended to outline the response of the National Botanic Gardens (NBGW) to the report of published by the Wales Audit Office.

Introduction to the National Botanic Garden of Wales (NBGW)

NBGW is an exciting new national institution for Wales. It is one of the biggest millennium projects in Wales and one of the most ambitious and visionary projects with the potential to define modern Wales. This ambition is expressed not only in the Garden's location – the 18th century regency park of Middleton Hall on the edge of the Tywi Valley – but also in the world-class architecture and vision of the Garden's designers in bringing together the pollution free environment, spectacular views of the surrounding countryside and a rich cultural heritage.

The Garden is also a unique opportunity to create and develop a resource of local, national and international significance dedicated to the visitor, conservation, the environment, science, education, leisure and the arts. The NBGW's ambition is to be not only a high quality visitor attraction but also to be an internationally recognised base for excellence in research. In this way the Garden is an environmental project of global significance.

A General Overview of the Report

The NBGW welcomes the Auditor General's Report. In fact, many of the Report's recommendations have already been put in place and those that are not in place will be completed in 2006. In this way the NBGW is now focussing on the future.

The Garden's recovery strategy, which has been in place for over the two years, has already led to a strengthened management function and structure within the NBGW. In addition, all new targets set for the NBGW have been met.

The Trustees were open at all times with the Auditor General and his staff. The Chairman of the Trustees provided all information requested by the Wales Audit Office and made a written submission to the Auditor General. The letter is attached to the Auditor General's Report and is publicly available.

The Auditor General's Findings

The report's two key findings are:

1. That those public bodies funding the NBGW could have done more to address the risks involved.
2. Those public bodies did not work closely enough together to share information.

The report also finds that the NBGW overestimated visitor numbers and has yet to resolve the issue with the science centre, now known as the Biotechnium.

In terms of visitor numbers, the forecasts were estimated by consultants and specialists working in the field of tourism. They were audited at the time to ensure that the figures were realistic in terms of the location of Middleton Hall and

comparisons were made with similar tourist attractions and the other botanic gardens in England and Scotland. At no time did NBGW either inflate or alter figures in order to cover losses. The losses were caused by higher operational costs occurring at the same time as a dip in visitor numbers following higher than expected visitor figures after the opening of the Gardens. A number of unforeseen events took place, including the impact of foot and mouth disease which led to the closure of the garden for a period

The Report's Recommendations

The report recommends that Welsh public bodies:

1. Assess the possible impact of any variations to business plans.
2. Require applicants to include details of contingency plans in case operational forecasts are not met.
3. Share information and collaborate more when providing funding to the same project.
4. To work with the NBGW to resolve the on-going issue of the science centre.

In many ways most of these recommendations are for other bodies and not the NBGW. In terms of the science centre the Garden has already been working with the WDA and others to establish a new "Biotechnium".

NBGW response to the Report

The National Botanic Garden of Wales welcomes the publication of the Wales Audit Office Report into the funding of the project. The report refers to a period in the Garden's history, which was widely reported at the time. Significant progress has been made since then as part of a comprehensive recovery programme in partnership with the Welsh Assembly Government, the Millennium Commission and Carmarthenshire County Council, which is providing a firm foundation for future success. Highlights include:

1. The Board has appointed seven new trustees which has significantly strengthened the overall strategic management of the Garden.
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7. An additional £1.3M grant was recently announced from the Millennium Commission for new capital enhancements.
8. Other initiatives include the appointment of the world-renowned, New York-based Welsh Architect, John Belle, to design a new Tropical Glasshouse within the Double Walled Garden.
9. Work to complete the Science Centre is ongoing and NBGW is in detailed discussions with the Welsh Assembly Government, the WDA and Swansea University on the future development of the centre as a "BioTechnium".
10. Further private investment will be announced in the near future.

Let us not forget that the Garden opened on time in May 2000 and on budget. The Garden has developed enormously within a short space of time and is recognised the world over as a Millennium project of global significance. We would not have been able to take these massive strides forward without the dedication and commitment of our staff and volunteers. We've had a great year in which we celebrated our fifth birthday and our close working partnership with our stakeholders is providing us with great confidence for the future.

Roy J Thomas
Chief Executive's Office

24 November 2005

Jeremy Colman
Auditor General
Wales Audit Office
Deri House
2-4 Park Grove
Cardiff
CF10 3PA

Dear Mr Colman

Introduction

1. The creation and development of The National Botanic Garden of Wales "NBGW" is an ambitious and visionary project, presenting significant and exciting opportunities for Wales. It is the first national botanic garden of the new millennium and the first to be created in the UK for almost two centuries. It has also presented considerable challenges to the Trustees and to the public sector partners, principally in Wales, which from the outset have worked in close collaboration towards a common vision.
2. Worldwide, botanic gardens now play major roles in science, horticulture, education, culture and tourism. Increasingly, over the last few decades, they have also become important centres for biodiversity and conservation, playing a role in integrating conservation and sustainable development and working collaboratively to achieve key international strategies.
3. The creation of NBGW coincides with a growing recognition that biological diversity is a global asset of key importance to present and future generations. Plants are recognised as a vital part of the world's natural heritage and an essential resource for the planet. They are a key component of global sustainability. It also coincides with the emergence of a confident, outward-looking Wales, with a National Assembly committed to sustainable development.
4. It is a precious opportunity for Wales to be the home for creating a world-class 21st Century national botanic garden incorporating such key international objectives. The tangible benefits of NBGW on a local and regional basis (economic, cultural, tourism, educational, scientific, etc) are significant and clearly identifiable, and are recognised by both public and private sector funders.

Public sector support for the NBGW

5. The support of the public sector has been clear throughout and remains strong as demonstrated by the close partnership which continues and has indeed recently been significantly strengthened with the Welsh Assembly Government ("WAG"). The NBGW has received significant assistance, financially and in other forms, from the public sector, ranging from pre-project studies commissioned and supported by Carmarthenshire County Council ("CCC"), the Welsh Office, the Welsh Development Agency ("WDA") and the Wales Tourist Board ("WTB") to the current publicly announced support from WAG, CCC and the Millennium Commission "MC". The support of the public sector at the embryonic stage provided the newly formed Trust with considerable reassurance in proceeding with its Millennium grant applications, which depended on demonstrating the viability of NBGW. It is a testament to the vision and determination of a number of organisations that the NBGW has been created, is currently viable and continues to develop.

The Board of Trustees

6. The Trustees see it as their principal responsibility to ensure the highest standards of corporate governance, putting in management and systems to ensure the mission of the Garden is achieved and the risks are properly accounted for and mitigated. Throughout the course of the project, from inception to current times, the Trustees have adopted best practice in corporate governance, as has been recognised by the Charity Commission and the Millennium Commission.

Risk Management

7. The Trustees have throughout commissioned reputable experts to research and advise upon key aspects of the Garden's development, including, amongst others, KPMG, Stevens and Associates, Ilex Leisure, Hall Aitken and Associates and PricewaterhouseCoopers. Extensive audits have been undertaken both by the Garden itself appointing independent and reputable auditors and by public sector auditors for each grant, including the European Court of Auditors, with no substantive issues identified. Each of the NBGW business plans considered in the Welsh Audit Office report is attributable to such expert advice (see the attached schedule). The Trustees considered such advice in the context of the NBGW's development and operation and used it to support their applications to funding bodies for match funding. Various funding bodies reviewed the advice provided, and the Trustees gained further reassurance from these funders' acceptance of the advice and assessment of its appropriateness.
8. Key to the business plans and forecasts has been an assessment of potential revenue for the project, with extensive professional advice commissioned on how the content of the NBGW should be developed and the consequential impact on visitor numbers - for example, the increase in visitor number forecasts in 1998 was based on the specific advice of Hall Aitken and Associates and Stevens and Associates, prominent leisure consultants with over 30 years experience, and was reviewed by KPMG in their assessment of the forecasts.

9. Extensive efforts have been made at each stage of development to identify and manage risks, with comprehensive risk management exercises at each key stage of the project undertaken by request of the Millennium Commission and facilitated by KPMG. Major risks identified from these exercises were:-

9.1 Could the NBGW be created on time and on budget?

The opening of the NBGW was achieved on time and on budget, a major success for a project of its magnitude.

9.2 Would the Trustees be able to raise match funding of some £21.6m to match the equivalent amount secured from the Millennium Commission?

Through an extensive fundraising effort match funds of £21.5m were secured in addition to the £21.7m from the Millennium Commission, with considerable success (above original forecasts) in leveraging significant private investment of £9m into the project.

9.3 Would the income from the visitor attraction underpin its longer-term commercial viability?

9.3.1 In terms of visitor numbers NBGW immediately established itself as one of the most visited attractions in Wales, with visitor numbers exceeding forecasts. However, a number of events which had not been taken into account by the various experts and could not be factored into their forecasts took place, including the impact of foot and mouth disease, which included closure of NBGW for a short period and the potential impact of free entry to museums.

9.3.2 Such factors as these led to lower income, with a relatively fixed overhead cost which was considered minimal by KPMG in the evaluation of NBGW commissioned by the WAG in 2002. The short term revenue support from the Welsh Assembly Government of 2002 and 2003 was consequently vital to ensure the continuation of the development of the NBGW, and WAG's support and intervention was greatly welcomed. However, in September 2003 the NBGW was informed that the WAG would not provide further short term revenue funding. This was a considerable test to the commitment of all involved in NBGW.

9.4 Would separate funding be available to develop and expand the science and education programmes, which are intrinsic to the Botanic Garden's mission?

9.4.1 A further key issue for the Trustees was and remains the development of appropriate science and education programmes, which are core to our charitable objectives. It was of considerable concern that in reviewing a way forward for The National Botanic Garden of Wales these became excluded from 2002 onwards in discussions with the WAG. Before the NBGW opened it was apparent that visitor income alone could not sustain substantive science and education programmes, akin to those of the vast majority of national botanic gardens. This concern was crystallised in 1999 and immediately discussed with our funding partners and highlighted to the National Assembly of Wales.

9.4.2 The support of the Economic Development Committee and Culture Committee of the National Assembly of Wales for the Garden to receive funding was of significant importance to the Trustees. Considerable investment has continued for our education programme, which has yielded significant benefits and gained wide recognition, resulting in the resurgence of confidence on the part of educational establishments and the public in the education programme provided.

Current position

10. It is a testament to the determination and effort of my fellow Trustees, staff, volunteers, supporters and the public of Wales and beyond that during this extremely difficult financial period between 2003-2004, when the threat of liquidation was real, NBGW survived and has subsequently been able to prosper. It is also a testament to the clear commitment and support of our stakeholders for the vision of NBGW and its importance to Wales that further funding was forthcoming.
11. In 2004 a Recovery Plan was put in place, agreed with all major stakeholders, which has been pursued with diligence. A further injection of funding was received in 2004 from the Welsh Assembly Government, Carmarthenshire County Council and the Millennium Commission.

Given this support, dedication and commitment the trading position of NBGW has improved significantly. Highlights include:-

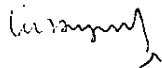
- Bottom line forecast exceeded by 16% for 2004/05, a trend continuing for 2005/06.
- £470,000 of further private sector funding secured for specific capital enhancements.
- Visitor number targets exceeded by 13% in 2004/05, with a year-on-year improvement for 2005/06 of 24%.
- Year-on-year favourable trading improvement of 55% (£518,000) for 2004/05 and a further year-on-year improvement of £226,000 to 31st August 2005 (net surplus of £120k vs £104k deficit).
- Market research provides evidence of 94% of visitors being satisfied or very satisfied with their experience of visiting NBGW
- Continued to deliver the education programme, with strengthened partnerships with CCC, Coleg Sir Gar and other education providers and with usage exceeding forecast by 72%.
- Continued to deliver many key policy objectives of stakeholders, e.g. Tir Gofal, Biodiversity Action Plans, etc.
- Continued to deliver conservation research on rare and endangered Welsh plants, supported by private funding.

BioTechnium

12. The BioTechnium, considered as a key node of the Technium network, was progressed with the full support of the WDA as joint venture partners following feasibility studies undertaken by KPMG, funded and commented upon by the WDA. We were encouraged by the pragmatic approach of the WDA in their support to the BioTechnium, a close partnership which continues. We were indeed grateful to the WDA for their commitment to take lead responsibility for resourcing and driving the project forward as communicated to the Millennium Commission and Welsh European Funding Office in early 2003 and are further encouraged by the continued commitment of the WDA and other stakeholders in the project. Recent developments provide renewed confidence that this important element will be delivered successfully in partnership.

The future

13. Despite the complex nature of the project and relatively short timescales much has been achieved in ensuring strong foundations for a national institution which will provide continuing benefits for the long term. Despite changing circumstances and unforeseen external factors the current financial position of the Trust exceeds original forecasts on which the project was progressed Firm and agreed plans are in place for the medium term, ensuring financial sustainability, with NBGW and stakeholders working closely to deliver these. The business plan of 2004-2009 is successfully being delivered. Financial trading targets and key milestones have been met or exceeded with income and visitor numbers above forecast and overheads being controlled within budget. In recognition of the importance of the National Botanic Garden of Wales and its objectives, including biodiversity and the sustainable agenda, further funds have been secured from the Millennium Commission and the private sector.
14. With the continuing support and close collaboration of our stakeholders, the strength of the vision for NBGW, realistic resources and the support of the public of Wales and beyond we are confident that NBGW will fulfil its potential and meet its objectives in full. It is a key national asset in which all should feel pride, and a legacy of the Millennium for this and, most importantly, future generations.



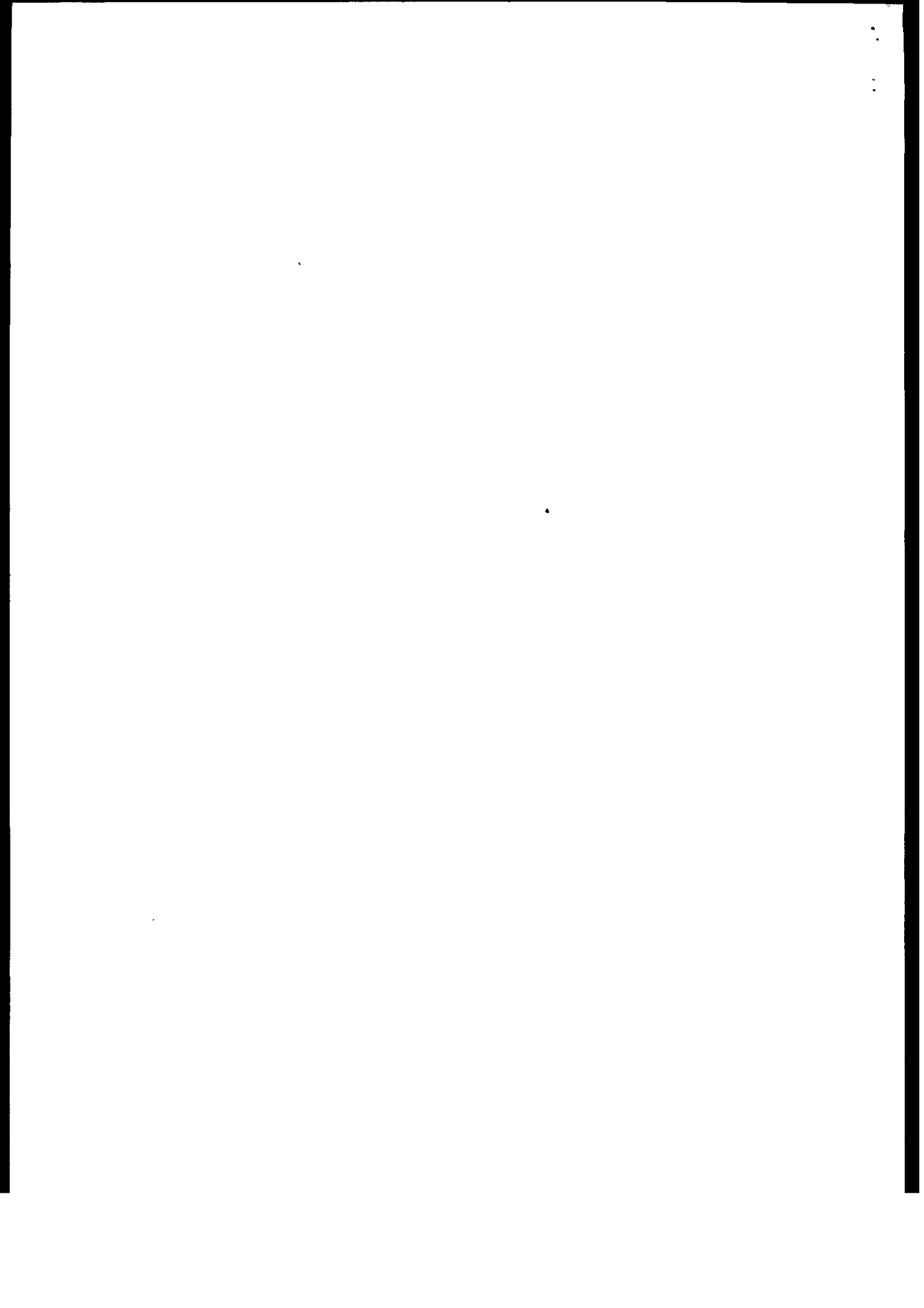
Alan Hayward
Chairman
The National Botanic Garden of Wales

Jeremy Colman
Archwilydd Cyffredinol
Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru
Tŷ Deri
2-4 Parc y Gelli
Caerdydd
CF10 3PA

Annwyl Mr Colman

Cyflwyniad

1. Mae creu a datblygu Gardd Fotaneg Genedlaethol Cymru "GFGC" yn brosiect uchelgeisiol a gweledigaethol, yn cyflwyno cyfleodd arwyddocaol a chyffrous ar gyfer Cymru. Dyma ardd fotaneg genedlaethol gyntaf y mileniwm newydd a'r gyntaf i'w chreu yn y Deyrnas Unedig am bron i ddwy ganrif. Yn ogystal mae wedi cyflwyno nifer o sialensiau i'r Ymddiriedolwyr ac i bartneriaid y sector cyhoeddus, yn bennaf yng Nghymru, sydd o'r cychwyn wedi cydweithio'n agos er mwyn cyrraedd nod cyffredin.
2. Yn fyd-eang, mae gerddi botaneg bellach â swyddogaeth allweddol mewn gwyddoniaeth, garddwriaeth, addysg, diwylliant a thwristiaeth. Yn gynyddol, dros yr ychydig ddegawdau diwethaf, daethant hefyd yn ganolfannau pwysig ar gyfer bioamrywiaeth a chadwraeth, gan wneud eu rhan i integreiddio cadwraeth a datblygiad cynaliadwy a gweithio ar y cyd i wireddu strategaethau rhyngwladol allweddol.
3. Cyd-ddigwydd creu GFGC â'r gydnabyddiaeth gynyddol fod bioamrywiaeth fiolegol yn gaffaeliad byd-eang o'r pwys mwyaf i genedlaethau'r presennol a'r dyfodol. Caiff planhigion eu cydnabod fel rhan hanfodol o dreftadaeth naturiol y byd ac yn adnodd angenrheidiol ar gyfer y blaned. Maent yn gydran allweddol mewn cynaliadwyedd byd-eang. Mae hefyd yn cyd-ddigwydd gydag ymddangosiad Cymru hyderus, gyda Chynulliad Cendlaethol sy'n ymrwymedig i ddatblygiad cynaliadwy.
4. Mae'n gyfle gwerthfawr i Gymru yn yr unfed ganrif ar hugain i fod yn gartref ar gyfer creu gardd fotaneg genedlaethol o'r radd flaenaf sy'n corffori'r fath amcanion rhyngwladol allweddol. Mae manteision diriaethol GFGC yn lleol ac yn rhanbarthol (yn economaidd, yn ddiwylliannol, yn dwristaidd, yn addysgiadol, yn wyddonol, ac ati) i'w canfod yn glir, ac fe'u cydnabyddir gan noddwyr y sector cyhoeddus ynghyd â'r sector preifat.



Cefnogaeth y sector cyhoeddus i Ardd Fotaneg Genedlaethol Cymru

5. Bu cefnogaeth y sector cyhoeddus yn amlwg ar hyd yr amser ac fe erys yn gadarn fel y dangoswyd gan y bartneriaeth glos sy'n parhau ac sy'n wir yn ddiweddar wedi'i hatgyfnerthu'n sylweddol gan Lywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru (LICC). Derbyniodd GFGC gymorth sylweddol, yn ariannol ac mewn ffurfiau eraill, o'r sector cyhoeddus, yn amrywio o astudiaethau rhag-brosiect a gomisiynwyd ac a gefnogwyd gan Gyngor Sir Caerfyrddin ("CSC"), y Swyddfa Gymreig, Awdurdod Datblygu Cymru ("ADC") a Bwrdd Croeso Cymru ("BCC") i'r gefnogaeth gyfredol wnaed yn gyhoeddus gan Lywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru, CSC a Chomisiwn y Mileniwm ("CM"). Rhoddodd cefnogaeth y sector cyhoeddus yn y cyfnod cynnar sicrwydd sylweddol i'r Ymddiriedolaeth, a oedd newydd ei ffurfio, i fwrw iddi gyda cheisiadau grant y Mileniwm, oedd yn dibynnu ar ddangos hyfywedd GFGC. Mae'n deyrnged i weledigaeth a phenderfyniad nifer o sefydliadau fod GFGC wedi ei chreu, ei bod ar hyn o bryd yn hyfyw a'i bod yn parhau i ddatblygu.

Bwrdd yr Ymddiriedolwyr

6. Gwêl yr Ymddiriedolwyr eu prif gyfrifoldeb fel un o sicrhau'r safonau uchaf o lywodraethu corfforaethol, gosod yn eu lle reolaeth a systemau i wneud yn siŵr y gwiredir cenhadaeth yr Ardd ac y cymerir y risgiau i lwyr ystyriaeth a'u lleihau. Ar hyd cwrs y prosiect, o'i gychwyn i'r presennol, mabwysiadodd yr Ymddiriedolwyr yr arfer gorau mewn llywodraethu corfforaethol, fel y cydnabuwyd gan y Comisiwn Elusen a Chomisiwn y Mileniwm.

Rheoli Risg

7. Ar hyd yr amser mae'r Ymddiriedolwyr wedi comisiynu arbenigwyr dibynadwy i ymchwilio i rai agweddau o ddatblygiad yr Ardd ac i gynghori ar yr agweddau hynny, gan gynnwys, ymhlith eraill, KPMG, Stevens a Phartneriaid, Ilex Leisure, Hall Aitken a Phartneriaid a PricewaterhouseCoopers. Cynhaliwyd archwiliadau eang gan yr Ardd ei hun yn penodi archwilwyr annibynnol a dibynadwy a chan archwilwyr y sector cyhoeddus ar gyfer pob grant, gan gynnwys Llys Archwilwyr Ewrop, heb unrhyw faterion sylweddol yn cael eu dynodi. Mae pob un o gynlluniau busnes yr Ardd gafodd ystyriaeth yn adroddiad Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru i'w briodoli i gyngor arbenigol o'r fath (gweler yr atodlen amgaeedig). Rhoddodd yr Ymddiriedolwyr ystyriaeth i gyngor o'r fath yng nghyd-destun datblygu a rhedeg GFGC a'i ddefnyddio i gefnogi'u ceisiadau i gyrff ariannu am arian cyfatebol. Yn eu tro adolygodd nifer o gyrff ariannu y cyngor a ddarparwyd, a chafodd yr Ymddiriedolwyr sicrwydd pellach wedi i'r cyllidwyr hyn dderbyn y cyngor ac asesiad o'i briodoldeb.
8. Yn allweddol i'r cynlluniau busnes a'r rhagolygon fu asesiad o'r refeniw posib ar gyfer y prosiect, gyda chyngor proffesiynol eang wedi'i gomisiynu ar y modd y dylid datblygu cynnwys GFGC a'r effaith ôl-ddilynol ar niferoedd yr ymwelwyr - er enghraifft, seiliwyd y cynnydd yn rhagolygon niferoedd yr ymwelwyr ym 1998 ar gyngor penodol Hall Aitken a Phartneriaid a Stevens a Phartneriaid, ymgynghorwyr hamdden amlwg â thros 30 mlynedd o brofiad, ac ategwyd at y cyngor hwn gan KPMG yn eu hasesiad hwythau o'r rhagolygon.

9. Gwnaed ymdrechion sylweddol ym mhob cyfnod o ddatblygiad i adnabod a rheoli risgiau, gydag ymarferion rheoli risg cynhwysfawr ym mhob cyfnod allweddol yn y prosiect, wnaed ar gais Comisiwn y Mileniwm ac a hwyluswyd gan KPMG. Y prif risgiau adnabuwyd o'r ymarferion hyn oedd:-

9.5 A ellid creu GFGC ar amser ac o fewn y gyllideb?

Cyflawnwyd y weithred o agor GFGC ar amser ac o fewn y gyllideb, llwyddiant rhyfeddol i brosiect mor fawr.

9.6 A fyddai'r Ymddiriedolwyr yn gallu codi'r arian cyfatebol o £21.6m i gyfateb i'r swm cyfatebol sicrhawyd o Gomisiwn y Mileniwm?

Drwy ymdrech ddygn i godi arian sicrhawyd arian cyfatebol o £21.5m yn ychwanegol at y £21.7m o Gomisiwn y Mileniwm, gyda chryn lwyddiant (uwchlaw rhagolygon gwreiddiol) o sicrhau buddsoddiad preifat sylweddol o £9m i mewn i'r prosiect.

9.7 A fyddai'r incwm o ddenu ymwelwyr yn greiddiol i'w hyfywedd masnachol hirdymor?

9.3.1 Yn nhermau niferoedd ymwelwyr sefydlodd GFGC ei hun ar unwaith fel un o'r atyniadau ddenodd fwyaf o ymwelwyr yng Nghymru, gyda niferoedd yr ymwelwyr yn rhagori ar ragolygon. Fodd bynnag, digwyddodd nifer o ddigwyddiadau na chymerwyd i ystyriaeth gan yr amrywiol arbenigwyr ac na ellid eu ffactoreiddio i mewn i'w rhagolygon, gynhwysai gau GFGC am gyfnod byr ac effaith bosib mynediad rhad ac am ddim i amgueddfeydd.

9.3.2 Arweiniodd ffactorau megis y rhain at incwm is, gyda chostau cyffredinol ystyriwyd yn isafol gan KPMG yng ngwerthusiad GFGC gomisiynwyd gan Lywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru yn 2002. Roedd y gefnogaeth refferiwr fyrdymor oddi wrth Lywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru yn 2002 a 2003 o ganlyniad yn hanfodol i sicrhau parhad yn natblygiad GFGC, a chroesawyd yn fawr gefnogaeth ac ymyrraeth LICC. Fodd bynnag, ym Medi 2003 hysbyswyd GFGC na fyddai LICC yn cyflenwi mwy o gyllid refferiwr byrdymor. Roedd hwn yn deyrnged sylweddol i ymrwymiad pawb ynghlwm wrth Ardd Fotaneg Genedlaethol Cymru.

9.8 A fyddai cyllid ar wahân ar gael i ddatblygu ac ehangu'r rhaglenni gwyddoniaeth ac addysg, sy'n gynhenid i genhadaeth yr Ardd Fotaneg?

9.4.1 Mater allweddol pellach i'r Ymddiriedolwyr ar y pryd a mater sy'n dal yr un mor allweddol yw datblygiad rhaglenni gwyddoniaeth ac addysg, sy'n graidd i'n hamcanion elusengar. Roedd yn fater o bryder, wrth adolygu'r ffordd ymlaen i Ardd Fotaneg Genedlaethol Cymru, i'r rhain gael eu heithrio o 2002 ymlaen mewn trafodaethau gyda LICC. Cyn i Ardd Fotaneg Genedlaethol Cymru agor roedd yn amlwg na allai incwm ymwelwyr ar ei ben ei hun gynnal rhaglenni gwyddoniaeth ac addysg sylweddol, yn debyg i fwyafrif helaeth y gerddi botaneg cenedlaethol. Crisialwyd y pryder hwn ym 1999 ac fe'i trafodwyd yn union gyda'n partneriaid cyllido a thynnwyd sylw cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru ato.

9.4.2 Roedd cefnogaeth Pwyllgor Datblygu Economaidd a Phwyllgor Diwylliant Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru i'r Ardd dderbyn cyllid o'r pwys mwyaf i'r Ymddiriedolwyr. Parhaodd buddsoddiad sylweddol i'n rhaglen addysg, sydd wedi esgor ar fanteision sylweddol ac wedi ennill cydnabyddiaeth eang, gan arwain at atgyfodi hyder ar ran sefydliadau addysgiadol a'r cyhoedd yn y rhaglen addysg a ddarperir.

Y Sefyllfa gyfredol

10. Mae'n deyrnged i benderfyniad ac ymdrech fy nghyd-Ymddiriedolwyr, staff, gwirfoddolwyr, cefnogwyr a'r cyhoedd yng Nghymru a thu hwnt, yn ystod y cyfnod ariannol hynod anodd rhwng 2003-2004, pan oedd bygythiad diddymiad yn real, i Ardd Fotaneg Genedlaethol Cymru oroesi ac y bu iddi yn ddiweddarach allu ffynnu. Mae hefyd yn deyrnged i ymrwymiad a chefnogaeth amlwg ein rhanddeiliaid i'r weledigaeth o Ardd Fotaneg Genedlaethol Cymru a'i phwysigrwydd i Gymru fod cyllid pellach ar y ffordd.
11. Yn 2004 gosodwyd Cynllun Adfer yn ei le, fe'i cytunwyd gyda'r prif rhanddeiliaid i gyd, ac fe'i gweithredwyd yn ddygn a dyfal. Derbyniwyd chwistrelliad pellach o gyllid yn 2004 oddi wrth Lywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru, Cyngor Sir Caerfyrddin a Chomisiwn y Mileniwm.

O gael y gefnogaeth hon, yr ymrwymiad a'r teyrngarwch gwelwyd gwelliant sylweddol yn sefyllfa GFGC. Cynhwysa'r uchafbwyntiau:-

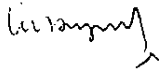
- Rhagori 16% ar y rhagolygon llinell waelod ar gyfer 2004/05, tuedd sy'n parhau ar gyfer 2005/06.
- Sicrhau £470,000 pellach o gyllid y sector preifat ar gyfer gwelliannau cyfalaf penodol.
- Rhagori 13% ar dargedau niferoedd yr ymwelwyr yn 2004/05, gyda gwelliant blwyddyn ar ôl blwyddyn ar gyfer 2005/06 o 24%.
- Gwelliant masnachol ffafriol blwyddyn ar ôl blwyddyn o 55% (£518,000) ar gyfer 2004/05 a gwelliant blwyddyn ar ôl blwyddyn pellach o £226,000 hyd at 31ain Awst 2005 (gwarged clir o £120k yn erbyn diffyg o £104k).
- Mae ymchwil masnachol yn darparu tystiolaeth fod 94% o ymwelwyr yn fodlon neu'n fodlon iawn â'u profiad o ymweld â GFGC.
- Parhau i gyflenwi'r rhaglen addysg, ac atgyfnerthu'r partneriaethau gyda Chyngor Sir Caerfyrddin, Coleg Sir Gâr a chyflenwyr addysg eraill a chyda defnydd yn rhagori ar ragolygon o 72%.
- Parhau i gyflenwi nifer o amcanion polisi allweddol rhanddeiliaid, e.e. Tir Gofal, Cynlluniau Gweithredu Bioamrywiath, ac ati.
- Parhau i gyflenwi ymchwil cadwraeth ar blanhigion prin a phlanhigion Cymru sydd mewn perygl, gyda chefnogaeth cyllid preifat.

BioTechnium

12. Aed rhagddo â'r BioTechnium, a ystyriwyd yn nod allweddol y rhwydwaith Technium, gyda chefnogaeth lawn ADC fel partneriaeth ar y cyd yn dilyn astudiaethau dichonoldeb gyflawnwyd gan KPMG, wedi'u cyllido gan ADC ac yn gyfrwng gwneud sylwadau arnynt. Fe'n calonogwyd gan agwedd ymarferol ADC yn ei gefnogaeth i'r BioTechnium, partneriaeth glos sy'n parhau. Roeddem yn wir yn gwerthfawrogi ymrwymiad ADC yn cymryd y cyfrifoldeb arweiniol am ymchwilio i adnoddau a gyrru'r prosiect yn ei flaen fel y cyfathrebwyd i Gomisiwn y Mileniwm a Swyddfa Cyllid Ewropeaidd Cymru yn gynnar yn 2003 ac fe'n calonogwyd ymhellach gan ymrwymiad parhaus ADC a rhanddeiliaid eraill yn y prosiect. Darpara datblygiadau diweddar hyder adnewyddol y cyflenwir yn llwyddiannus yr elfen bwysig hon mewn partneriaeth.

Y Dyfodol

13. Er gwaethaf natur gymhleth y prosiect a'r terfynau amser cymharol fyr gwireddwyd llawer i sicrhau sylfeini cadarn ar gyfer sefydliad cenedlaethol fydd yn darparu manteision parhaus ar gyfer y tymor hir. Er gwaethaf amgylchiadau newidiol a ffactorau allanol nas rhagwelir mae sefyllfa ariannol gyfredol yr Ymddiriedolaeth yn rhagori ar y rhagolygon gwreiddiol y datblygwyd y prosiect arnynt. Mae cynlluniau cadarn a chytûn yn eu lle ar gyfer y tymor canolig, gan sicrhau cynaliadwyedd ariannol, gyda GFGC a rhanddeiliaid yn gweithio'n glos i'w cyflawni. Mae cynllun busnes 2004-2009 yn cael ei gyflawni'n llwyddiannus. Cyfarfuwyd â thargedau masnachu ariannol a cherrig milltir allweddol, neu fe ragorwyd arnynt, gydag incwm a niferoedd yr ymwelwyr uwchlaw'r rhagolygon a chostau cyffredinol yn cael eu rheoli o fewn y gyllideb. Wrth gydnabod pwysigrwydd Gardd Fotaneg Genedlaethol Cymru a'i hamcanion, sicrhawyd cyllid pellach oddi wrth Gomisiwn y Mileniwm a'r sector preifat.
14. Gyda chefnogaeth barhaus a chydweithrediad clos ein rhanddeiliaid, cadernid y weledigaeth dros Ardd Fotaneg Genedlaethol Cymru, adnoddau realistig a chefnogaeth y cyhoedd yng Nghymru a thu hwnt, rydym yn hyderus y bydd GFGC yn cyflawni'i photensial ac yn cwrdd â'i hamcanion yn llawn. Mae'n gaffaeliad cenedlaethol allweddol y dylai pawb ymfalchïo ynddo, ac yn etifeddiaeth y Mileniwm ar gyfer y genhedlaeth hon ac ar gyfer cenedlaethau'r dyfodol.



Alan Hayward
Cadeirydd
Gardd Fotaneg Genedlaethol Cymru

