



Cyrnol (wedi ymddeol) / Colonel (Retired) Nick Lock OBE
Cadeirydd Dros Dro yr Ymddiriedolwyr/Acting Chair of Trustees
Amgueddfa'r Ffiwsilwyr Brenhinol Cymreig / The Royal Welch Fusiliers Museum
Castell Caernarfon / Caernarfon Castle

16th January 2024

Dear Deputy Minister,

I write on behalf of the Trustees of the Royal Welch Fusiliers Museum, which is based at Caernarfon Castle.

We would like to request that the Welsh Government reconsiders its draft decision to impose a cut of 22.3% in funding to Cadw which we believe will lead to significant consequences for the RWF Museum.

The Museum has been based in the castle since 1960 and is the largest military museum in Wales. We curate 22,000 artefacts and documents within an internationally important historical collection. Our collection and exhibition depicts three hundred years of military service by Wales' oldest infantry regiment. The Museum receives 100,000 visitors each year, many of whom are from overseas and only visit Caernarfon Castle to see our collection. We also deliver educational programs, in support of the new Welsh curriculum, to 3,400 students annually and our online platforms also engage with over 200,000 viewers and researchers.

The Museum is currently funded through annual grants from Cadw (£95,000) and the MOD (£24,000) along with private donations, sponsorship and sales from the Museum shop. The Museum is set to lose its MOD funding in 2030 so have invested in recent years in a transitional plan which aims to grow income from private donations and sponsors to replace our non-Cadw funding and ensure our sustainability but any significant change in our annual Cadw grant will severely hamper and jeopardise our efforts.

We note that the Welsh Government's draft budget proposes that all other cultural and heritage organisations will face funding cuts of just 10% and are concerned that there seems to be no justification for Cadw facing cuts of 22.3%, especially given its statutory obligations.

The Museum's relationship with Cadw is excellent. Cadw has acknowledged the work that we do to attract visitors to both the Museum and Caernarfon Castle and appreciates that the Museum is an integral part of the offer to visitors to Caernarfon Castle, we are therefore very concerned that Cadw has notified the Trustees of impending cuts to the Museum's grant in a bid to meet their significantly smaller budget.

While the Museum recognises the financial challenges faced by the Welsh Government the reality is that if Cadw is forced to pass on the full 22.3% cut then the immediate future of the Museum will be unsustainable.

Given that more than 100,000 men served in the Regiment in the First World War and a sizeable number during the Second World War, many families across Wales share their family history with the Royal Welch Fusiliers. The poets Hedd Wyn, Robert Graves and David Jones, as well as artists such as Kyffin Williams all served with the Regiment. Many of their manuscripts and paintings are on display at the Museum. It would be a tragedy if these collections were no longer accessible.

Given the above, the Museum Trustees would urge the Welsh Government to reconsider the proposed cuts to Cadw's budget in order to ensure that the RWF Museum and the unique Welsh heritage for which we are responsible, is able to survive and will be accessible for all.

Yours Faithfully

Nick Lock

Copies to:

Member of - Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee

Darren Millar MS - Chair Cross Party Armed Forces and Cadets Committee