



Delyth Jewell MS
Chair Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1SN

By email: Delyth.Jewell@senedd.wales

16th January 2024

Dear Ms Jewell,

Re: Proposed Budget Cuts to Cadw and Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW).

I am writing to you on behalf of the Wales Heritage Group regarding the cuts proposed to both Cadw and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) in the draft budget 2024-25, announced in December 2023.

The Wales Heritage Group is an alliance of statutory consultees and voluntary national organisations active in the conservation of the historic environment in Wales. Heritage is vital for social, economic and environmental wellbeing of people and communities in Wales. It is key in promoting sustainable development supporting wider regeneration, catalysing investment and enhancing skills for jobs.

Disproportionate Funding Cuts

Whilst we recognise that the Welsh Government, like the UK more broadly, cannot escape the current economic climate where tough choices about where to make funding cuts are needed, the Wales Heritage Group are deeply concerned by the extent of the proposed cut of 22.3% to the core revenue funding of both Cadw and the Royal Commission. In real terms this amounts to a c27% cut, almost a third of their core funding. The sustainability of both bodies, and as a result the important work they do, will be catastrophically impacted. It is impossible to see an operational future for the RCAHMW following such a severe cut. Cadw will need to scale back all but their core statutory purposes. This will massively impact the ability of both bodies to deliver against Wales's Well-being of Future Generations Act, to which essential and highly valued contributions are currently made in relation to the historic environment.

Cadw and the Royal Commission are the two bodies that care for and promote an understanding of Wales's historic environment and heritage. The Welsh landscape, its buried archaeology and its built heritage are the physical record of how people have been interacting with the natural environment in Wales for thousands of years; essentially, the record of Wales's evolution as place and a nation. Not only do these arms-length heritage bodies care for and manage Wales's historic environment, but they also facilitate people's interaction with and enjoyment of it. Thousands of connections between current generations and the places that help define a sense of Welsh identity are enabled through their work and the small grants Cadw make to small independent heritage bodies to fulfil

this mission. Cadw's grant aid for small, localised projects makes possible the participation of people with their place in a way that holds resonance and meaning for them. The fragility of the eco-system of small heritage organisations, where small grants enable the (often voluntary) work of local people to live the goals set out in The Well-being of Future Generations Act according to the Social Value Framework, should not be underestimated.

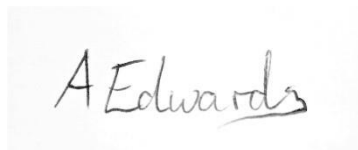
Impact of the Cuts

The members of the Wales Heritage Group deliver national and local heritage projects which benefit the people of Wales through the conservation of their heritage and opportunities for individuals and communities to be involved with and learn about their heritage. This helps develop a sense of identity, promotes well-being and economic regeneration, and helps heritage act as a vital part of Welsh culture and tourism. Our members rely on grant funding from Cadw to achieve these goals, and cuts to this funding will directly impact our ability to carry out our work in Wales.

Heritage organisations are the very bedrock of grassroots and community heritage in Wales and will be further impacted by these cuts, on top of the major disruption of the pandemic, causing long-term damage to heritage in Wales and thereby the benefits which heritage delivers for Welsh people.

We ask for clarification on why heritage has been targeted so disproportionately for funding cuts, in comparison to 10.5% cuts to other arts and cultural bodies such as the Arts Council Wales, Amgueddfa Cymru, National Library, Sport Wales and the National Botanic Garden. We consider that an urgent review of the proposed cuts is required to avoid long-term damage to the heritage of Wales.

Yours sincerely,



Alison Edwards

Secretary, Wales Heritage Group