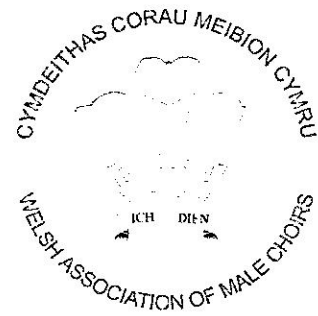


Cymdeithas Corau Meibion Cymru Welsh Association of Male Choirs



o Square,
Abergavenny
NP7 5JT

14th October 2018

Bethan Sayed AM
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Dear Ms Sayed

Hitting the Right Note – inquiry into funding for and access to music education carried out by the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee of the National Assembly.

I am writing on behalf of the Welsh Association of Male Choirs. The Association has almost one hundred member choirs with the majority being located in Wales; others are based in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, England, Northern Ireland, Canada and the US.

We have followed the work of this inquiry in recent months and commend the Committee for its work; we support the main body of recommendations. We have also seen the response to the report from the Welsh Assembly Government including the decision to institute a 6-month feasibility study on some of the key recommendations; in our view, this will further delay any action being taken to remedy what is an already perilous situation for music education in most parts of Wales.

In your introduction to *Hitting the Right Note*, you highlighted the importance of music to the culture and heritage of Wales. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the Welsh male choir tradition with their histories stretching back 150 years and more, with the extraordinary talents of composers, musicians and singers produced by choirs over the years, and the often unrecognised benefits provided by choirs to communities, families and individuals throughout Wales. Music is the sound of the soul of a nation.

We will continue to support the development of the choral tradition but our work can only be made harder if the current lack of support for music education for ALL learners is allowed to continue. The evidence of decline is incontrovertible and action is needed as a matter of urgency. Although the Welsh Assembly Government response to *Hitting the Right Note* discounted a number of the key recommendations, we believe that at least two of them should be reconsidered:

- An immediate thematic review by Estyn would provide an accurate assessment of the position in music education;
- Publish a clear statement of policy on music education from the Welsh Assembly Government in order to provide direction to local authorities in their funding decisions.

The Welsh Association of Male Choirs would be happy to offer any information or support required at either a local or a national level.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Evans". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Chris Evans
General Secretary
WAMC

01873 857875
07885 303883
Chris.evans1@btinternet.com