

Culture Committee - CC-5-01(p.1)

Date: 14th March 2001

Time: 9.00am - 12.15pm

Venue: Committee Room 1, National Assembly Building

The Council of Museums in Wales

Presentation to the Culture Committee

14th March, 2001

The Council of Museums in Wales

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Who We Are

The standards and development agency for Welsh Local Authority and Independent Trust Museums. A non statutory body funded by the National Assembly for Wales. A Charitable Trust and a private company limited by guarantee.

We are a membership body

Members include 21 Local Authorities

34 Independent Trusts

10 Associate members

We are a small organisation

- Council of 90 nominated by the membership
- Chairman and Executive Committee of 12
- Staff of 9: 7 in Cardiff and 2 in Wrexham

What We do

Advocacy

We act as advocates of Welsh Local Authority and Independent Trust museum interests to the National Assembly for Wales, UK Government, Local Authorities, other professional bodies and the general public.

Strategic Planning and Development

We provide a strategic overview of museum provision in Wales to the National Assembly for Wales by commissioning research and collecting routine information. We act upon strategic considerations in assessing development proposals, setting grant aid priorities and by collaborative working with the National Museums & Galleries of Wales and other organisations and funding bodies.

Standards Development

We improve standards in member museums by giving free advice on national standards and best practice, by issuing technical information and by assessing professional standards.

Grant Aid

We distribute 35% of core expenditure as grant-in-aid to member museums in accordance with set priorities and procedures and we promote access to other grant schemes including the Heritage Lottery Fund, the New Opportunities Fund and EC Funds.

Training

We facilitate the skill development of museum personnel (staff and volunteers) by direct training provision, by providing grants towards training costs and by improving the training infrastructure for continuous professional development within the sector.

Resource Management

In order to provide a cost effective service we manage the resources of CMW in compliance with Charitable and Company Law and National Assembly for Wales's agreements.

"A Better Wales" – CMW's Contribution

Better Opportunities for Learning

- promoting the use of museums as centres of learning
- funding innovative education work
- ensuring that sufficient good quality information about the content of museums is made available to the public through ICT
- promoting the need for appropriate training opportunities in Wales
- providing specialised training.

A Better Stronger Economy

- grant aiding specialised jobs in areas of identified need
- working to improve facilities in museums to enhance the tourism product
- developing museums' services to act as a resource for community regeneration.

Better Health & Well being

- supporting reminiscence work with the elderly
- promoting outreach activities aimed at combating social exclusion
- encouraging volunteering programmes.

Better quality of life

- raising museum service standards to improve existing local museum facilities
- developing good facilities in areas where there are none
- increasing knowledge about specific aspects of Welsh culture and history
- promoting the use of the Welsh language in museums.

Better simpler government

- working closely with other agencies in the cultural and heritage sectors in Wales and the UK
- ensuring the efficient and effective use of our own resources.

THE MUSEUMS CMW WORKS WITH

We work with over 80 museums

38 Local Authority museums

26 Independent Trusts

9 National Trust properties

5 Regimental Trusts

3 University museums

Together these museums

- care for an estimated 2 million artefacts and specimens
- receive over 2 million actual visitors per year
- are registered under the UK Museum Registration Scheme or are working towards the achievement of minimum standards
- are operated by professionally qualified and volunteer staff

Key Strategic Issues

- **Need for a Museums Strategy for Wales**

Identification of common interests and funding priorities across the National, Local Authority and Independent museum sectors.

- **Cross Sector Working**

Closer working between museums, libraries and archives domains and the cultural, heritage and tourism sectors - Cymru'n Creu.

- **National and Non National Collaboration**

Effective working between NMGW and Local Authority and Independent museums.

- **Improved Access to Museum Education Provision**

A coherent pattern of provision for curriculum based and life-long learning and museums as key contributors to National Grid for Learning.

- **Promoting Social Inclusion**

Identifying priorities for opening up cultural access, e.g. improving information services, reducing admission charges and reaching new audiences through specific programme development.

- **Defining Economic Contribution**

Recognition of the museum sector's actual and potential contribution to the economy, especially tourism and community regeneration.

- **Local Authority Funding**

The need for a review of Local Authority museum service plans and an examination of funding levels.

- **Liaison with Lottery Distributors**

The need for closer synchronisation between all the Lottery distribution bodies on strategy and project outcomes with regard to museums.

- **A National Acquisition Fund**

As the UK funding position changes, Welsh museums need to maintain the financial capacity to acquire significant items within policy guidelines.

- **Professional curatorial training based in Wales**

A fully accredited post graduate course in museum practice would uplift professional standards and would also have the knock on effect of encouraging vocational training at GNVQ levels.

Collaboration between National and Non National Museums

CMW is keen to see museum providers working together in an integrated and sustained way. Possibilities include:

- Identification of strategic priorities
- Agreement on national collecting policies

- A Dispersed National Collection
- A National Loan Scheme
- Shared storage and conservation facilities
- A touring exhibition programme
- Curatorial Advisors to museums

Current CMW Initiatives

- **ICT Challenge Fund**

To create a sound ICT foundation in museums to support access and learning projects

- **Education Challenge Fund**

To support innovation in the field of curriculum based and informal learning

- **Museum Sector Mapping Programme**

An audit of collections, facilities and service provision to assist with strategic planning and benchmarking.

- **Gathering Performance Data about museums in Wales**

- **Strategic Research projects**

e.g. Agricultural museums, sporting memorabilia and maritime collections