

Dawn Bowden AS/MS
Dirprwy Weinidog y Celfyddydau a Chwaraeon, a'r Prif Chwip
Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref Petition P-06-1323
Ein cyf/Our ref DB/00037/23

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

7 February 2023

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your correspondence of 23 January about petition P-06-1323 and the request that the Welsh Government step in and purchase St David's Hall in Cardiff. The Welsh Government would like to see it continue to welcome diverse performers and audiences to its unique surroundings.

The future of the venue is an issue for Cardiff Council. The Council is not immune to the immense financial pressures faced by all local authorities in Wales, and while the best is being done to protect its budgets, the Welsh Government is aware that very difficult options must be explored.

Cardiff Council is mindful of the status of the building as a multi-purpose cultural venue and the need to maintain the integrity of the acoustics in the Hall and has committed to ensuring the venue retains its place as the National Concert Hall of Wales. If Cardiff Council choose to progress the deal with AMG, I would strongly encourage them to reflect this commitment in the contractually binding terms, including appropriate safeguards, to ensure the venue's cultural standing in Wales is maintained and protected for years to come.

With the cost-of-living crisis, spiralling energy costs and the slow recovery from Covid, it is a difficult time for theatres and arts venues. Venues are having to explore how they can be more resilient and sustainable. However, St David's Hall, with its exceptional acoustics, has a very important role in orchestral and classical music provision in the capital. It also hosts many community-based activities across a broad spectrum of interests, abilities and ages, and we are keen to understand how such programmes are to be protected or developed in any new proposal.

Cardiff Council has already engaged with the Welsh Government and with the Arts Council of Wales (ACW) about the venue's future. Cardiff Council is also engaging with the buildings

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Dawn.Bowden@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Dawn.Bowden@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

key stakeholders about their concerns and requirements, should AGM/Live Music take over the building's operation, and I have urged Cardiff Council to continue those discussions.

The Welsh Government only received a request for funding from Cardiff Council on 22 December, subsequent to the in-principle agreement from Cardiff Council to progress with the proposal to hand over the running of St David's Hall to AGM/Live Music, which was given on 15 December. Any funding request to the Welsh Government would need to be considered through the submission of a full business case and with the support of ACW.

Given the significant level of funding required, the Welsh Government is not in a position to pay for the repairs or subsidise the ongoing operation of the building. Any decision on funding would require a full five case business model to be submitted.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dawn Bowden'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'D' and 'B'.

Dawn Bowden AS/MS

Dirprwy Weinidog y Celfyddydau a Chwaraeon, a'r Prif Chwip
Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, and Chief Whip