



8th January 2024

Delyth Jewel MS

Chair, Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee,
Senedd Cymru Welsh Parliament.

Dear Ms Jewell,

Welsh Government Draft Budget 2024-25

On behalf of the trustees and staff of Addoldai Cymru - the Welsh Religious Buildings Trust - I am writing with regard to your Committee's scrutiny of the Welsh Government Draft Budget for 2024-25, and in particular to the Draft Budget's potential impact on the work of Cadw and the RCAHMW, and their support for heritage organisations in Wales.

Addoldai Cymru is a charity established by the Welsh Government through Cadw in 1999 in response to the increasing problem of closures amongst Wales' rich heritage of Nonconformist chapels. As well as raising awareness of that heritage, which has been described as the "National Architecture of Wales", Addoldai Cymru has been charged with taking into care chapels or other non-Anglican religious buildings of exceptional architectural or historical quality that have become redundant; furthermore Addoldai Cymru is a prescribed charity under the Redundant Churches and other Religious Buildings Act 1969 which permits the transfer of a religious building at less than full market value. To date, 11 highly listed chapels have been taken into care, and each has required considerable capital expenditure on essential repairs.

Since 1999, Addoldai Cymru has developed a close relationship with both Cadw and the RCAHMW. From the outset, the Trust's costs have been supported by an annual revenue grant from Cadw, which is then allocated between core running costs and building overheads. The current (2023-24) grant represents 88% of our revenue income. Meanwhile, the Trust houses on its own website the RCAHMW's detailed database of the 6,500+ Nonconformist chapels that have been erected in Wales.

My fellow trustees and staff are alarmed by the proposed allocations to both bodies that are set out in the Draft Budget, particularly since both are liable to a cut well in excess of that affecting other bodies within the Culture directorate. In our view, Cadw performs its wide range of activities in support of Wales' built heritage exceptionally well on a budget proportionately lower than the equivalent bodies in England and Scotland, and this is borne out by the recently published independent review. RCAHMW's comparatively small staff perform work of outstanding quality. Our concern is not only that the fine work and expertise of these two bodies may be harmed, but also clients such as ourselves may suffer irreparable damage should the full extent of the proposed budget cut be passed on. An extract from our draft business plan for 2024-25 is attached, and this shows that winding up the charity has become a real possibility for trustees. We would welcome an opportunity to present our case to the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Scourfield, Chair.

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