



Patrons: Sir Simon Jenkins FSA, FRSL. Dr Euwyn Wiliam MA, PhD, FSA

Dear Deputy Minister,

**PROPOSED BUDGET CUTS TO THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE ANCIENT
AND HISTORIC MONUMENTS OF WALES**

On behalf of Discovering Old Welsh Houses, I would like to express our deep shock and concern at the proposed cuts to the Royal Commission's baseline grant for 2024-5. Even in an age of austerity, a 25% cut seems to be particularly savage. It will undermine the Commission's ability to enhance public understanding and enjoyment of Wales's unique heritage. We understand that the cuts will not even cover the redundancy costs necessary to restructure the organisation. With equally severe cuts planned for Cadw, we are baffled as to why the Welsh Government has singled out our heritage for such draconian treatment. It stands in marked contrast to the generous additional spending on arts and culture announced last month by the Scottish Deputy First Minister who believes that 'the transformational power of our culture is immense' and acknowledges its power to enable 'individuals and organisations to realise their potential'.

This belief in the enabling power of heritage strikes a chord with us. Discovering Old Welsh Houses is an active group of over 200 members that works hard to raise public appreciation of the smaller historic houses of North Wales, especially the rich legacy of farm houses. It has a busy schedule of public meetings and workshops and a publicly accessible digital archive of many hundreds of house histories, architectural and scientific dating reports, most of them compiled by volunteers. Over the last twenty years, the Royal Commission has been our valued partner, promoting our work and helping our members learn new skills. In addition, our partnership has, over the years, helped us raise over £250,000 from public, charitable and private sources for our survey work—all accessible on our website and that of the Commission. This has raised international awareness of Wales's unique traditional buildings. The loss of the Royal Commission's support would be a grievous blow to the voluntary heritage sector. Please think again.

Yours sincerely,

Janice Dale,

Chair, Discovering Old Welsh Houses.

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