

Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN


27/02/2025

Dear Ms Jewell

I am very concerned about the apparent lack of progress over the repair of St David's Hall.

As you know, the hall was closed in September 2023 and in February 2024 Cardiff Council signed an agreement with Academy Music Group (AMG) for a 45-year lease to take on the running of St David's Hall.

In July 2024 the council's cabinet member for culture, sports and parks, Cllr Jennifer Burke, said "the listing of the building has significantly prolonged the process of its repair. AMG are currently finalising costs with contractors with a view to submitting an application towards the end of the summer. It's anticipated that the work will take about 18 months to complete, once all the related plannings are secured".

At the beginning of February 2025 Wales on Line reported that delays to work on Cardiff's St David's Hall had left Jennifer Burke "beyond frustrated". She was sure "that planning applications are expected imminently and that... part of the issue has been that costs have gone up because of the extent of the RAAC".

So it would appear that very little progress has been made in the year since the agreement was made with AMG.

Disturbingly, in October 2024 Wales on Line reported that "a new 15,000-seater indoor arena for Cardiff had been confirmed with the signing of a development and funding agreement. Contracts have been exchanged between Cardiff Council, global venue and entertainment operator Live Nation Entertainment and its partner OVG (Oak View Group), which will operate the arena, and Robertson Property as development partner.

The £250m project, which will be at the heart of the transformation of Atlantic Wharf in Cardiff with a 30-acre mixed-use development, had been hit by inflation over the last few years, which added around £100m to the cost. However, Live Nation, which will operate the arena under a 45-year lease with the council, has agreed to make a £100m financial contribution towards the project. Subject to financial close, work will start 2025 with the arena expected to open in the second half of 2027."

Live Nation owns 51% of AMG and runs the 5000 -7500 capacity Utilita Arena which is about 350 metres from St David's Hall.

So Live Nation will control 3 large concert venues in Cardiff which appears too many.

The Wales on Line report of February 2025 suggests some of the council are being kept in the dark about progress. The council also seem to have little control over the project.

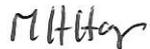
I am beginning to doubt that St David's Hall will reopen at all.

I have enjoyed many experiences in the 40 years the Hall has been open, from Beethoven to the Capital City Jazz Orchestra, and consider it a first class venue. Not only are the acoustics and sight lines excellent but it is simply a pleasure to sit in the hall and admire the surroundings.

I am afraid that the delays outlined above, together with the continuing lack of maintenance, will lead to the repair work being abandoned on cost grounds. To do so on a purpose built concert hall only 40 years old would be vandalism of the highest order.

I would be grateful for your comments.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Hayes'.

Michael Hayes