

**Pwyllgor Diwylliant, Cyfathrebu, y Gymraeg,
Chwaraeon, a Chysylltiadau Rhyngwladol**

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**Culture, Communications, Welsh Language,
Sport, and International Relations Committee**
5 November 2025

Ashok Ahir, President
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Annual Scrutiny of the National Library of Wales

Dear Ashok and Rhodri,

Thank you for attending the Committee's meeting on 8 October 2025 as part of our Annual Scrutiny of the National Library of Wales. The Committee would like to thank you for your time and for the evidence that you shared with the Committee. As we mentioned during the session, there are one or two further issues we wanted to raise with you, which we didn't have time to raise during the session, and these are dealt with below.

Budget considerations

The Committee is very conscious of the effect of recent real-term reductions in Welsh Government revenue funding and the challenges that the sector has faced in recent years.

Following a decade of real-terms cuts from the Welsh Government, the Library's ambition seems constrained by the funding reality it faces. You explained that a "standstill budget" would enable the Library to deliver its strategic plan – which was launched after the 2024-25 cuts - but would require the Library to be "disciplined".

You explained that, following the 2024-25 cuts, the Library "had to cut staff and revamp our structures" and that consequently the Library has lost certain conservation skills.

Your evidence provided a number of examples of how the Library could contribute more were it resourced accordingly – from promoting Wales overseas to conserving a greater diversity of Welsh heritage. We were excited, for example, to hear about your plans to "establish a centre of excellence in conservation for Wales".

We think the Library should think ambitiously beyond the current financial situation, and make the case clearly for what it could do were it funded more adequately by the Welsh Government.

The Committee also noted your clear view that *Celf* (the Welsh Government's National Art Gallery project) will continue to need continued financial support from the Government for the project to be sustainable. You said that:

it is difficult to see the current capacity continuing without some form of investment from the Welsh Government. We have one official focusing on this element. If that funding came to an end and if there was a direction for us to continue supporting to a similar level in terms of resource, then we would need to look internally at something else being reduced in order to allow that, perhaps.

It is worth noting that all the members of the project board (the Library, Amgueddfa Cymru and the Arts Council) have now told us that the National Contemporary Art Gallery needs ongoing funding from the Welsh Government.

In-year funding:

The committee has heard evidence from you and others about the difficulty inherent in planning budgets to accommodate in-year funding increases (and welcome though those funding increases may be).

You told us that:

"Yes, it's a challenge because it's difficult to plan for those opportunities that are happening in-year, and you're expected to deliver the work before the end of the financial year, because we can't carry it over. So, that is a challenge. And so we have to arrange resources in order to be able to deliver and meet those specific deadlines. We would wish for more flexibility and a greater period of time for preparation and planning for taking advantage of those pots of funding"

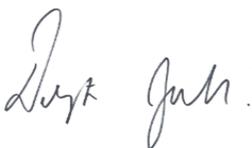
Any additional funding for our national cultural institutions is evidently welcome. We are concerned, however, that the Welsh Government's current working practice seems to be to provide unduly restrictive annual grant-in-aid funding, and then to top this up in-year when additional money becomes available. We understand that there are clear limitations on what in-year revenue funding can be spent on, when this funding isn't reconciled with the organisation's baseline grant-in-aid allocation. Organisations cannot use this funding to hire permanent staff, or establish new, ongoing areas of work. We fear that this may be no more than a sticking-plaster for the problems caused by long-term under-funding of culture by the Welsh Government. It is our belief that the Welsh Government should provide better long-term financial planning for the sector by increasing baseline grant-in-aid allocations, and relying less on topping up this funding in-year.

The Committee will wish to raise these matters as part of our scrutiny of the Welsh Government draft budget in the coming weeks.

Thank you once again for your attendance at Committee and for your valuable insights.

I am copying this letter to the Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership.

Yours sincerely,



Delyth Jewell MS
Committee Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.