

Ms Dawn Bowden
Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism
Welsh Government
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1SN
By email: Dawn.Bowden@gov.wales

15th January 2024

Dear Ms Bowden,

Re: Proposed Budget Cuts to Cadw and Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW).

I am writing to you on behalf of the Council for British Archaeology regarding the cuts proposed to both Cadw and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) in the draft budget 2024-25, announced in December 2023.

Whilst we recognise that the Welsh Government, like the UK more broadly, cannot escape the current economic climate where tough choices about where to make funding cuts are needed, the CBA are deeply concerned by the extent of the proposed cut of 22.3% to the core revenue funding of both Cadw and the Royal Commission. **In real terms this amounts to a c27% cut**, almost a third of their core funding. The sustainability of both bodies, and as a result the important work they do, will be catastrophically impacted. It is impossible to see an operational future for the RCAHMW following such a severe cut. Cadw will need to scale back all but their core statutory purposes. This will massively impact the ability of both bodies to deliver against Wales's Well-being of Future Generations Act, to which essential and highly valued contributions are currently made in relation to the historic environment.

Cadw and the Royal Commission are the two arms-length bodies (ALBs) that care for and promote an understanding of Wales's historic environment and heritage. The Welsh landscape, its buried archaeology and its built heritage are the physical record of how people have been interacting with the natural environment in Wales for thousands of years; essentially, the record of Wales's evolution as place and a nation. Not only do these arms-length heritage bodies care for and manage Wales's historic environment, but they also facilitate people's interaction with and enjoyment of it. Thousands of connections between current generations and the places that help define a sense of Welsh identity are enabled



Council for British Archaeology

through their work and the small grants Cadw make to small independent heritage bodies to fulfil this mission. Cadw's grant aid for small, localised projects makes possible the participation of people with their place in a way that holds resonance and meaning for them.

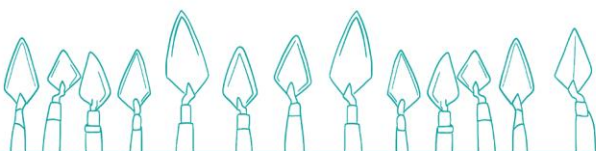
The fragility of the eco-system of small heritage organisations, where small grants enable the (often voluntary) work of local people to live the goals set out in The Well-being of Future Generations Act according to the Social Value Framework, should not be underestimated. We have seen the impact issues such as Covid can have on these groups through research we undertook in Wales in 2021 (supported by the Wales Culture Recovery Fund) where the number of active community groups fell by over 250 from 700 in 2014 to 420 in 2021. These groups are the very bedrock of grassroots and community heritage in Wales and will be further impacted by these cuts, causing long-term damage to heritage in Wales and thereby the benefits which heritage delivers for Welsh people.

The scale of funding cuts faced by Cadw and the Royal Commission will directly impact the contribution heritage in Wales makes to delivering the 7 connected well-being goals for Wales. The CBA have firsthand experience of this through the grant funding we receive from Cadw that enables our pan-Wales network of Young Archaeologists' Clubs (YAC), including one that we run online to reach children in remote areas. Without the funding provided by Cadw the CBA would not be able to resource this YAC network. Similarly, a relatively small grant from Cadw towards the cost of delivering the Festival of Archaeology in Wales each year enables specifically Welsh focused work like producing bilingual resources. As a small charity with financial challenges ourselves, there is no way we could make up the funding shortfall from the loss of grants we receive from Cadw. The impact would be a reduced delivery, which would be felt by people on the ground.

We are also very concerned the impact these cuts will have on the proposal to merge the Welsh Archaeological Trusts to create Heneb, the Trust for Welsh Archaeology. The cuts will have serious financial impacts on the viability of Heneb, its successful merger and what it is able to deliver for the people of Wales.

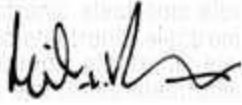
Disproportionate Funding Cuts

Whilst we understand the need for cuts we are extremely disappointed to see such a stark disparity between the 22.3% cuts to heritage bodies (Cadw and the Royal Commission) in comparison to 10.5% cuts to other arts and cultural bodies such as the Arts Council Wales, Amgueddfa Cymru, National Library, Sport Wales and the National Botanic Garden. Why have you identified and chosen to attack heritage in Wales to this degree? We see no justifiable reason for the disparity in cuts and consider an urgent review is required to avoid a catastrophic decimation of heritage in Wales.



Council for British Archaeology

Yours Sincerely,



Neil Redfern,
Executive Director

CC:

Delyth Jewell MS, Chair Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee (Delyth.Jewell@senedd.wales)

Tom Giffard, Shadow Minister for Culture Tourism and Sport (Tom.Giffard@Senedd.Wales)

Heledd Fychan, Plaid Cymru Spokesperson on Culture (Heledd.Fychan@senedd.wales)

Jason Thomas, Director of Culture, Sport and Tourism (jason.thomas@gov.wales)

Founded in 1944, the Council for British Archaeology champion and help safeguard archaeology and public participation. As the voice of archaeology in the UK we bring together community groups, commercial units, academics and heritage organisations to create and share opportunities to discover, take part and be inspired by archaeology.

