

# **Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales**

## **Public Engagement and Consultation Putting the Citizen at the Centre**

## INDEX

<b>1.</b>	<b>Background</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Public Engagement and Consultation Policy</b>	<b>7</b>
	2.1 Purpose of the policy	7
	2.2 Values and Ethical Principles	7
	2.3 Engaging with others	9
	2.4 Methods of Public Engagement	10
	2.5 Supporting Public Engagement at Amgueddfa Cymru	14

## Section 1      Background

Since its Foundation by Royal Charter in 1907, Amgueddfa Cymru has held its collections in trust on behalf of the people of Wales. As owners they are involved in a dialogue with us as to how the Museums and Collections are cared for, used and developed. Engaging with the public is fundamental to the way Amgueddfa Cymru operates and provides an increasingly broad context in which we consider and evaluate our work. People engage in a mutually supportive process where all views help contribute to a shared understanding, and to change.

In 2006, we published Amgueddfa Cymru's **Vision for the Future: Creating a World Class Museum of Learning**, following a two-year period of consultation and engagement with a wide range of 'stakeholders' – people that hold an interest in, or affected by, our work. This Vision commits Amgueddfa Cymru to developing relationships with new and diverse audiences, and to creating further opportunities for existing visitors and users by responding more positively to their needs. Specific commitment to public engagement is made in three priority areas:

**Finding paths to make sense of the world.....***by learning from our visitors*

**Learning through sharing.....***by finding ways to welcome and engage with people who don't currently visit our museums; and*

**Growing through learning.....***by engaging in dialogue and benchmarking activities with our partners, stakeholders and peer groups, to further develop our own professional practice and improve the quality of our museums as places to work and visit.*

Furthermore, a structured and purposeful programme of public engagement and consultation will support the delivery of developments within the other four priority areas in the Vision:

**Creating living museums.....***where the collections tell their stories more clearly, and visitors experience life in the past and present and explore a variety of possible futures*

**Developing flourishing collections... ..***that are well used, sustained and growing*

**Communicating... ..***so that Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales becomes known worldwide as a centre of learning of international quality; and*

**Building our resources... ..***so that we have a strong and solid base, from which we will be able to deliver our Vision for the next decade and beyond.*

In 2009 we created a Vision Map that set out our priorities across a three year work programme – 2009/12 – 2011/12. This is revised annually and the Vision Map for 2010/11 – 2012/13 sets out the strategic plan using the following perspectives and ten core objectives:

### **People of Wales**

- We will develop our world-class museum spaces to inspire learning and connect people with the past, present and future
- We will deliver an international reputation

### **Re:presenting Wales**

- We will engage with defined priority audiences
- We will deliver contemporary and relevant world-class collections and research
- We will communicate collections and collective memories through relevant, meaningful and enriching storytelling

### **Improving our performance**

- We will expand community, strategic and financial partnerships
- We will maintain and develop talent, professional skills and core competencies in our staff
- We will implement virtual and new media solutions

### **Financial Success**

- We will advocate for public, political and financial sustainability
- We will ensure a strategic and commercial approach to the development and allocation of resources.

The ethos of consultation has always been reflected in the Charter; Amgueddfa Cymru's Court of Governors, originally established in 1907, acted as a governing and consultative body and its membership included a wide range of stakeholders. During 2005/06, Amgueddfa Cymru made progress in preparing proposals for reforming the governance of the Museum to reflect devolution of government and other developments. This process built on both the work of the Visioning process and the recommendations of an earlier quinquennial review undertaken at the request of the Welsh Assembly Government.

A Petition was made to the Privy Council for a Supplemental Royal Charter to incorporate recommended changes and other modernisations – including reference to a consultation scheme to replace the Court. The revised Charter was granted in September 2006. The proposed outline scheme of consultation to replace Court at that time was:

- Two open meetings each year, which would be well publicised and actively marketed
- A consultation database
- Special subject and interest forums which would evolve and be subject to change from time to time; and
- *Ad hoc* forums on specific issues which could also change from time to time and would evolve
- Regular meetings with the Culture Committee of the Assembly and other bodies; and
- Regular contact with cultural, historical and scientific organisations which have related interests, both local and national

- A formal reporting structure back to the Board of Trustees (the Council).

The revised Statutes of the Museum include reference to the Duty of the Trustees to Consult:

- (1) The Trustees are to:-
  - (a) adopt a scheme prescribing arrangements to enable the Trustees to:
    - (i) regularly consult with the public and with bodies having an interest in the furtherance of the objects of the Museum, and
    - (ii) identify persons qualified and willing to provide support and advice to the Museum in connection with the furtherance of the objects of the Museum
  - (b) implement the scheme referred to in the previous sub-paragraph and keep its terms under regular review and if thought fit from time to time amend the said scheme
- (2) In connection with the duty to consult or otherwise the Trustees may set up one or more advisory or consultation bodies for the Museum. The function of such a body is to assist and advise the Trustees regarding the future development of the Museum and the Trustees may from time to time determine and amend the rules and powers governing such a body and ultimately disband the same. A member of such a body is not to be responsible for the affairs of the Museum. The powers of such a body and its members are to be powers of recommendation only.

While Amgueddfa Cymru is a Royal Charter Body, and a Registered Charity, it is also an Assembly Government Sponsored Body (AGSB), and as such is committed to supporting the Welsh Assembly Government's Strategic Agenda as currently set out in *One Wales: A progressive agenda for the government of Wales*. In particular, Amgueddfa Cymru actively supports and contributes to the Assembly Government's 'Making the Connections' agenda which promotes, among other things, active participation and engagement between the public and the providers of public services.

Further, the Beecham Report, received by the Welsh Assembly Government in July 2006 as part of the action plan for implementing its Making the Connections strategy for improving public service delivery in Wales, identified public / citizen engagement as an important factor in the delivery of public services.

Other major external funding bodies such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, Trusts and Foundations, and corporate sponsors now state that the intention to consult with stakeholders is implicit within funding applications. Indeed it is often a prerequisite for funding. So notwithstanding Amgueddfa Cymru's own decision to implement a Consultation Scheme, external agencies are also responding to contemporary social

imperatives. These initiatives seek to deliver democratic accountability, and the co-creation of sustainable communities through active citizenship.

The purpose of the Museum's **Public Engagement and Consultation Policy** is to provide some detail and substance regarding the methods being employed to achieve the most appropriate and fruitful public engagement.

## **Section 2      Public Engagement and Consultation Policy**

### **2.1 Purpose of the Policy**

The Public Engagement and Consultation Policy is designed to set out the parameters for all aspects of Amgueddfa Cymru's deliberative and participative citizen engagement and consultation. It outlines the values and principles to which we adhere.

### **2.2 Values and Ethical Principles**

Amgueddfa Cymru is proactive in its determination to engage the public in an equitable, participative and mutually beneficial dialogue. It recognises that:

- Everyone has the right to participate in the decisions about the work of Amgueddfa Cymru that affects their lives
- Stakeholders in Amgueddfa Cymru can add huge value to the development and implementation of our Vision
- Public engagement, carried out in accordance with the Consultation Scheme, should lead to change for the better at Amgueddfa Cymru.

Amgueddfa Cymru will follow the headline and ethical research principles which are recognised as best practice in the field of public engagement, and ensure that they are followed across the spectrum of our work:

#### **Making a Difference**

The purpose of public engagement is to make a difference for both the Museum and the participants. It enables Amgueddfa Cymru to make better decisions, participants to gain a developed sense of ownership of Amgueddfa Cymru and our collections, and it can also develop active citizenship and increase the knowledge and confidence of all those taking part.

#### **Inclusivity**

Amgueddfa Cymru will provide genuine opportunities for engagement and encourage the participation of all stakeholders who have an interest in or who would be affected by the focus of the project / activity in question. Amgueddfa Cymru will ensure that those from disadvantaged communities and minority groups, currently under-represented in the organisation's work, are included and ensure that appropriate groups of stakeholders are involved at the right stage of the process without employing any discriminatory or oppressive practices. Amgueddfa Cymru will ensure participants know whether we wish to engage with them as individual experts or as community representatives.

#### **Accessibility**

Amgueddfa Cymru will act to limit barriers to public engagement through appropriate timing of events, venues, provision of transport, translation etc., and will use a range of methods to verify results and to ensure practices are suitable for the diverse communities that are the target of the engagement.

## **Resources**

Amgueddfa Cymru will, before embarking on any project, ensure that, where appropriate, public engagement activity is built into planning processes, and will determine the resource implications ensuring that any public engagement activity can be completed properly without the risk of undermining results or creating mistrust and ill-feeling among those we have developed relationships with

## **Respect**

Amgueddfa Cymru will recognise and respect that individuals are motivated to become engaged for a variety of reasons. But whatever their reasons, they will only engage out of choice; their participation is voluntary. Everyone is an expert in their own experience and those planning and carrying out consultation activity will at all times respect the views of others.

## **Ethics and compliance**

As part of the public engagement activity, Amgueddfa Cymru will be collating the opinions and views of those attending the sessions. We will ensure that all personal data obtained during such activities will be managed and used in compliance with the **Data Protection Act 1998**, and will always adhere to the ethical research principles recognised within the sphere of social science when gathering or using data. Participants will be informed on how the information they provide will be used and their personal details will not be disclosed without their prior consent. There will be times when these activities will take place in the company of children and young people; in this case, we will be sure to obtain consent from the parent / guardian before approaching anyone below the age of 16.

On certain occasions, Amgueddfa Cymru will collect comments presented anonymously by the general public. This information will not contain any personal data which could identify the individual.

Amgueddfa Cymru's **Data Protection Policy** is on the Museum's website.

## **Openness, honesty and clarity**

Amgueddfa Cymru will provide a clear vision and purpose for each engagement activity and will seek a broad consensus through a thoughtful, deliberative dialogue with a range of stakeholders. Amgueddfa Cymru will provide stakeholders with all they need to make informed decisions and the advice and feedback received will be evaluated and fed back to participants fully.

## **Independence**

Amgueddfa Cymru will ensure that staff and volunteers who are trained in facilitation and public engagement and have a good knowledge of the subject matter take a lead in public engagement activities and will use an independent facilitator, if the subject / method requires it and the resources allow.

## **Accountability**

Amgueddfa Cymru will set out the purposes of each engagement activity clearly in an accessible manner, and will at the start of the engagement process state the action that will be taken as a result and how and when outcomes will be fed back. At



the end of the engagement process, Amgueddfa Cymru will feed back the results, demonstrating how stakeholders' involvement has shaped the Museum's actions and ensure that there are routes for follow-up including reporting on any further decisions, strategies and / or implementation plans.

The Annual Review and Financial Report are key public documents that set out Amgueddfa Cymru's activities across the whole organisation. These Reports are publicly presented to target audiences and stakeholders appropriately.

### **Sustainability**

Amgueddfa Cymru will ensure that active participation develops skills, knowledge and confidence, and increases a sense of ownership and empowerment among staff, volunteers and stakeholders.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

Amgueddfa Cymru will use front-end, formative and summative monitoring and evaluation throughout the engagement to process to ensure the process and impacts are effective.

## **2.3 Engaging with stakeholders**

**2.3.1** Before determining how best to engage with stakeholders (see section 2.4), a stakeholder analysis will be undertaken to identify which groups to engage with, how and in what order.

The Museum's key groups of stakeholders have been identified as follows:

- **Welsh Assembly Government** – Heritage Minister and officials, First Minister, Cabinet, CyMAL
- **Non Welsh Assembly Government Politicians** – Culture Board, All party Assembly Members, Welsh Members of Parliament, Welsh Members of the European Parliament
- **Other major funders** – Heritage Lottery Fund, Welsh European Funding Office, European Union, Art Fund, Arts Council of Wales, Cardiff City Council, City and County of Swansea and other Local Authorities via Landfill Tax, Trusts and Foundations, companies
- **Research Councils** – Natural Environment Research Council, Arts & Humanities Research Council
- **Decision-makers** – Regulators, Local Authorities, Department of Culture Media & Sport, National Parks Authorities
- **Peer organisations in Wales** – Partnership Programme, other Assembly Government Public Bodies, Tourism industry, other visitor attractions, Higher Education institutions, the Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales, other national organisations such as the Commission for Racial Equality
- **UK and Overseas Peers** – UK National Museums, National Museums Directors' Conference, Museums Association, Association of Leading Visitor Attractions, Museum Documentation Association, Museums Libraries & Archives Council, Overseas National Museums, UNESCO
- **Supporters and champions** – Board of Trustees, Advisory Committees & Panels, Patrons, Development Board, Benefactors, Donors, Friends

- **Visitors & Users (on site and online)** – Host communities, Wales & UK Public, Formal and Informal Education Sectors, groups with special interests / needs
- **Staff** including the three recognised Unions via Staff Forum.

### **2.3.2 Working with the Welsh Assembly Government**

Amgueddfa Cymru will continue to work with a range of committees and scrutiny committees as and when appropriate, including the joint meetings of the Assembly Government Public Bodies of Wales, CyMAL's Advisory Group, and the Sustainable Communities Unit. These are in addition to the Quarterly Review Meetings with the Museum's sponsoring Division at CyMAL.

### **2.3.3 An all Wales approach**

Amgueddfa Cymru will respond to the Welsh Assembly Government's objectives in working across the areas of Wales, as defined within the Assembly Government's Spatial Plan: North East Wales, North West Wales, Central Wales, Swansea Bay, South East Wales, Pembrokeshire Haven. The Museum will continue to work in partnership with others through the *Cyfoeth Cymru Gyfan – Sharing Treasures and Celf Cymru Gyfan – ArtShare Wales* schemes.

Opportunities will continue to be developed with the Local Authorities of Wales, building on the partnership work already undertaken with, for example, Swansea and the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority, and Cyngor Gwynedd.

## **2.4 Public Engagement Methods**

The main techniques and approaches Amgueddfa Cymru uses to engage the public through participation are listed below. The categorisation used has been devised for purposes of clarity and represents a simplification of what can be achieved. Methods are not mutually exclusive, the list is not exhaustive, and to accord with best practice a range of methods will be used for each project.

### **Visitor Observation - as a starting point**

Visitor observation is often a preferred method to begin a process of consultation. It involves observing how visitors move around a space / gallery / building / museum. What this process doesn't tell us is *why* people behave in a certain way, and for this, dialogue with visitors is required, usually through focus group / workshop activities.

Amgueddfa Cymru will use this method:

- To understand how visitors use our museum spaces
- To corroborate other research
- At the start of an engagement process to inform the questions that need to be asked
- To enable staff new to public engagement and consultation to gain the confidence and the skills, to enter the process and to understand the benefits

## **Consultation Documents**

The use of Consultation Documents, which set out proposals for the future and questions relating to them, is one of the most conventional and widespread forms of engagement; they are now often used in electronic formats.

Amgueddfa Cymru will use this method:

- As part of an engagement process, for example at the beginning, to start the process, or later to develop proposals and add detail, when it can be used to help raise interest in a subject and the work of Amgueddfa Cymru generally
- For consultations that are straightforward and well understood and for getting detailed input on policies and proposals from professionally and technically qualified stakeholders
- To complement the application of other participative techniques. While consultation documents generally allow stakeholders to state their view or position, they do not, on their own, foster engagement between stakeholders or encourage ownership of problems or solutions.

## **Open and Public Meetings**

The definition of an 'open meeting' within the sphere of public consultation and engagement, is that the meeting is open to the public to attend as observers. This means people are unable to contribute to the proceedings of the meeting. By contrast, a public meeting can, in its most effective form, be fully inclusive and participatory. We make the distinction between an open and public meeting thus:

### **Open Meetings**

All meetings of the Board of Trustees, held quarterly and around the regions of Wales, are open to the public. These are well publicised to encourage members of the public to attend, and selected stakeholders receive invitations. Attendees are non-participating observers, but provision is made at specific points either during or after the meeting for those present to meet with Board Members and Directors individually.

Amgueddfa Cymru will use this method:

- At every Board Meeting to enable the public to witness the proceedings of the Board of Trustees and Executive in an open and transparent environment.

### **Public Meetings**

Public meetings are a form of direct engagement where barriers to access and participative engagement are removed. They will also be well advertised publicly, and invitations will be sent to key stakeholder groups. They enable single or a cluster of themes and projects to be presented to a wide audience. They enable direct dialogue and networking opportunities with participants through programmed participative interaction throughout the meeting.

Amgueddfa Cymru will use this method:

- To enable the Museum to engage a wide audience in a broad sense
- When we want to provide information to and consult with large numbers of stakeholders
- To generate positive relationships with key groups of stakeholders
- To generate press and PR interest.

### **Public Engagement / Expert Panels**

These are formed on the basis of interest, academic or professional expertise, affiliation, geographical location, demographic make-up, age group, etc., with a range of group sizes evenly recruited to ensure there is balanced and appropriate representation. Generally recruited panels can be known as Citizens' Panels.

These are one of the more formal methods of consultation and engagement and are used to explore issues in depth and for stakeholders to make recommendations. Amgueddfa Cymru can interact with panels through electronic media or through meetings and they can be established on a task and finish basis, or so that their views will be sought over a longer period of time to measure changing patterns in attitude and behaviour.

Amgueddfa Cymru will use this method:

- To test ideas and identify concerns before we consult more widely with the other stakeholders
- At any point during the engagement process where specific issues need to be discussed and ideas developed
- To build relationships with groups or individuals establishing advocates who can communicate with wider groups of stakeholders
- When it is important to engage stakeholders regarding complex or contentious issues
- When small group sizes are required to ensure that issues and concerns can be addressed directly, and accurate information given in direct response to specific questions.
- When the views of specialists are vital to informing the development of a project or activity
- When it is important to maintain continuity of membership to develop relationships that underpin longer-term processes.

### **Workshops**

Workshop formats are very flexible methods and can be used on a one-off basis, or over a period of hours, days months or even years. They will most certainly be used to complement other engagement methods.

Amgueddfa Cymru will use this method:

- To involve a range of different stakeholders to bring a variety of views together in one place

- To gather together all stakeholders to jointly decide what needs to be discussed and the mechanisms for achieving action
- To build relationships and real involvement, and to facilitate implementation processes
- To work with stakeholders on a regular basis to help develop or provide input into a strategy or policy development. In this respect they are similar to the public engagement panels mentioned above.

### **Focus Groups**

Focus Groups are used to bring together disparate individuals related by type, e.g. members of a marketing mailing list segmented by type (family, single adult, interested in natural history, etc.) and can be used in a variety of situations to help pilot materials, equipment, display panels, etc., and for seeking feedback and views from targeted groups on areas such as policies and plans, activity and events.

Amgueddfa Cymru will use this method:

- To allow staff to test how well prototypes work and whether or not the 'product' is being used / understood / interpreted in the way intended by the designer
- To allow participants to freely express their views
- To engage with a range of participants who reflect the targeted end users. Since they are selected and grouped by type, a number of focus groups can be run with similar participants, and the results contrasted with feedback from other groups. The number of participants will usually be no more than 20 and everyone will be invited on the basis that they will contribute.

### **Surveys and Questionnaires**

Surveys and Questionnaires can be used to gather statistical and quantitative information on specific topics or to receive more general feedback. Questionnaires can be designed either for self-completion or for completion by interviewers. Care will be taken to ensure that a representative sample is obtained.

Amgueddfa Cymru will use this method:

- When we need large amounts of quantitative and qualitative data
- When we need to seek the views on a range of possible options (via multiple choice questions)
- When it is important to allow stakeholders to respond anonymously to a process
- When we want to enable respondents to comment at multiple access points and at times to suit them.

### **The Website, Web Logs and E-mail**

Through the Web, Web Logs, or 'blogs' we can provide and receive commentary or news on a particular subject. Blogs form part of a wider social media network, and this links very clearly into the relationship development aspect of engagement.

E-mail communications will be particularly helpful in maintaining dialogue with stakeholders during what may often be lengthy periods of personal contact.

Amgueddfa Cymru will use these methods:

- To engage with a large number of stakeholders at relatively little cost
- To enable participants to share information and engage in a dialogue together
- To maintain contact with participants and to distribute information on public engagement activity
- To enable readers to leave comments in an interactive format, extending the static format of postcards and graffiti walls
- In parallel with other methods of public engagement, recognizing that a large percentage of the population of Wales still does not have access to the Internet and some people, even with access, prefer traditional communication methods.

### **Other methods**

Other methods used at Amgueddfa Cymru for asking stakeholders their opinions include comments books, postcards, feedback forms. These have been and will continue to be used in a variety of locations, including reception desks, exhibition spaces and at events to obtain feedback on the quality of the service provided, to leave contact details for mailing lists, to lodge opinions about an exhibition, event, activity, or to enable people to simply leave an opinion. Some headline questions or statements will be included in relevant circumstances to channel responses if, for example, specific learning outcomes are being sought. Other methods such as video diaries, drawings, value continuum lines, and so on are also useful for capturing information on learning, enjoyment levels, skills development and behavioural change, and will be incorporated into future activity.

A number of general events and activities also provide opportunities to promote and engage with the public via participatory practices. We will continue to develop such activity.

Finally, it is often helpful to bring in outside agencies and expertise to carry out consultation activities and visitor profiling. This will support and complement the work carried out by staff, and highlight different aspects of methodology, develop our work and learning from others.

## **2.5 Supporting Public Engagement at Amgueddfa Cymru**

We support our staff in carrying out public engagement and consultation with the public in a number of different ways:

### **The Consultation Database**

Details of people who have asked to receive information from us in relation to public engagement, or who have agreed to take part in a consultation, are stored in our central contact database.

All personal data gathered by Amgueddfa Cymru during its normal course of business complies with the Data Protection Act 1998. An internal working group monitors the Database to ensure that all contact information held is managed and used in compliance with requirements of the same Act and Ethical Social Research practices, as mentioned above.

## **Resources**

We have a library of published and web-based resources available to our staff.

## **Networks**

A database of networks within and without the heritage / cultural sector has been established to log where best practice and generic information on public engagement and consultation can be accessed. Internal staff networks help share best practice and develop particular skills. Two examples of our active involvement in external agencies are below:

- Amgueddfa Cymru is a member of the Visitor Studies Group (VSG), which aims to be the 'voice of visitor studies'. It is a 'national group of engaged professionals who support each other to achieve best practice in this area. The VSG seeks to advocate best practice by representing opinion and expertise, to participate in debate and to impact on policy and strategy across the cultural sector.' Amgueddfa Cymru's Museum Secretary is currently Deputy Chair of the VSG.
- The Museum Secretary is also a member of the Advisory Panel (Board) of Participation Cymru. This organisation works with the voluntary and public sector to deliver a range of public engagement services to organisations that are actively engaged in developing citizen engagement programmes.

## **Staff training**

A bespoke programme of staff awareness-raising and training was delivered to some 150 staff during 2008 and 2009, specifically introducing the theory and practical tools for engagement and consultation. This is being further supported by individual sessions for staff working on specific projects, as well as the development of further workshops that deliver new elements and initiatives that evolve. Staff are encouraged to participate in external training and networking events, especially those delivered by the Visitor Studies Group and Participation Cymru.

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