

# Strategy for Events, 2018-23

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Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales

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## 1. Summary

The strategy will outline how Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales aims to develop its reputation as a major event provider with a strong brand and clarity of purpose. It sets out the direction for developing a balanced and sustainable portfolio of Amgueddfa Cymru events and festivals over the next five years. It supports Amgueddfa Cymru's Vision, to be an organisation that is Inspiring People, Changing Lives. It demonstrates how an integrated events programme can drive public participation and support the well-being of people and communities in Wales. It also demonstrates the contribution events make to the prosperity of Amgueddfa Cymru and Wales in terms of raising income, improving profile and supporting cultural tourism.

The strategy provides a structure for us to build on past success and learn from good practice. It is designed to engage, guide and support everyone involved in the development and delivery of events. It outlines how we will develop our reputation as a major event provider with strong brands and clear objectives. Developing a set criteria for events with consistent standards across Amgueddfa Cymru will rationalise the events programme, improving our approach to developing and delivering events. The action plan outlines priority areas to develop and deliver over the next five years.

The strategy responds to the recent Thurley Review of Amgueddfa Cymru, Welsh Government's Strategy Prosperity for All and Welsh Government's Major Event Strategy For Wales (2010-20). Our compliance with the Welsh Language standards<sup>1</sup> and integration with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015<sup>2</sup> are embedded throughout the strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://museum.wales/about/policy/welsh-language-policy/>

<sup>2</sup> Amgueddfa Cymru is working towards the national goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and other Welsh Government strategies and initiatives. For detail see <http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/future-generations-act/?lang=en>

## 2. Definition and Context

### 2.1. What do we mean by an event?

This strategy focuses on the events programme across Amgueddfa Cymru and includes the following:

- High profile one-off or recurring events
  - for example: festivals, re-enactment spectaculars, anniversaries and evening programmes
- Events to support learning
  - for example: talks, tours, courses and holiday programmes
- National campaigns and events
  - for example: the Eisteddfodau, Welsh Museums Festival and Museums at Night
- Community celebrations and events
  - for example LGBT, Black History and Diwali
- Events to support cultural tourism in Wales
  - for example events to support Visit Wales

These events are often delivered in partnership with others.

All venue hire events and fundraising events do not form part of this strategy.

### 2.2. Why are events important to Amgueddfa Cymru?

Events offer an outlet for interpreting collections in new and innovative ways. Events are a key part of the core museum offer at Amgueddfa Cymru.

Events:

- Engage, educate and entertain
- Create interest in Amgueddfa Cymru and promote our work
- Involve diverse communities, local and national partners
- Generate income and produce other economic benefits
- Generate footfall and remove barriers to engagement

They work alongside the exhibitions programme to provide a range of connected experiences and opportunities. This helps to increase our visitor numbers and diversify the range of people who use our museums. Involving people and communities in shaping and delivering our events can drive public participation and

deliver a more balanced and inclusive programme. Events also support the prosperity of Amgueddfa Cymru in terms of raising income, increasing visitor numbers, improving profile and supporting cultural tourism.

Staff from various departments contribute to the delivery of the events programme, including: curatorial, conservation, learning and visitor services. The delivery of events provides an opportunity for staff to collaborate across teams.

### **2.3. How does the strategy support Amgueddfa Cymru's Vision?**

This strategy has been developed in line with and in response to Amgueddfa Cymru's Vision for 2015-25, to be an organisation that is Inspiring people, Changing lives. This Vision reflects an aspiration to root our work in Welsh cultural and intellectual traditions and to develop a new paradigm for national museums across the world. Our Purpose, in support of this Vision, is to 'Inspire people through our museums and collections to find a sense of well-being and identity, to discover, enjoy and learn bilingually, and to understand Wales' place in the wider world.' The aims and objectives in this strategy work towards supporting the four key commitments identified in the Vision: Prosper, Experience, Learn and Participate.

The strategy demonstrates how an integrated event programmes can drive public participation and support the well-being of people and communities in Wales. It also demonstrates the contribution events make to drive the prosperity of Amgueddfa Cymru and Wales in terms of raising income, improving profile and supporting cultural tourism. It outlines how we will develop our reputation as a major event provider with strong brands, clear digital and marketing campaigns, with a more strategic approach to partnership working. The programme will be an invaluable asset for supporting Amgueddfa Cymru's membership scheme. It will entice transaction-based members with exclusive access and discounts to events.

The strategy provides a structure for us to build on past success and learn from good practice. It is designed to guide and support everyone involved in the development and delivery of events. It is essential that we align our programming processes to focus on the outcomes, ensure parity of quality across museums and appropriately assign resources. We need to ensure longer term planning which will allow for content planning and marketing lead times. This will lead to improved tickets sales

and increased participation as Amgueddfa Cymru's reputation as a high quality event provider develops.

Links to Welsh Government cultural tourism campaigns, national campaigns and partnership events with external organizations will improve as we become more focused and more confident in using criteria to inform our decision making processes. The strategy will maximize opportunities for partnership working and working across sectors and improve professional partnerships with key decision makers such as Wales' Major Events Unit and Visit Wales.

The strategy is an active strategy and will develop as we implement the associated Action Plan.

## **2.4. What are the challenges?**

This strategy acknowledges that as a charity and public sector body in Wales we face a number of challenges – economic, organisational and political. At Amgueddfa Cymru there are challenges in terms of events due to the breadth and complexity of experiences on offer, the diversity of our museum settings across Wales and the range of audiences and users all with their differing needs. Other challenges have been detailed in this section.

### **2.4.1. Our resources are limited (financial and human)**

As an organisation we currently lack financial resources to fully support our programme development and delivery. This in itself is challenging at a time of public sector cuts. In the short term we will focus on increasing the income generated through our events programme and evaluate our programmes to ensure we apply the resources we have to best use. We also lack resources in terms of marketing our events. This will be reviewed as we develop the Amgueddfa Cymru brand.

### **2.4.2 We do not currently reach all audiences**

Our work on audience research indicates that we do not currently reach all audiences; our visitor profile does not reflect the diversity of audiences in Wales. At Amgueddfa Cymru we have started on a journey towards cultural democracy. For us, as an organization, participation is about the way we operate as a museum as much as the experiences we provide for our visitors. We are in the process of developing several approaches to embed people's right to cultural participation in our ways of

working and as part of our delivery viz-à-viz the goals of the Well-being of Future generations. These initiatives include 'Our museum, Our Community', supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, and Hands on Heritage, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Engaging diverse communities and young people through these initiatives will open up new ways of looking at and framing our events programme, informed by an awareness of social inequalities.

These initiatives will focus on embedding Cultural Rights in our operation and in so doing develop models for involving people in our decision making processes in terms of the design and delivery of our events programme.

#### **2.4.3 We have limited data and no customer data management system**

Current we do not have the capability to accurately capture visitor data. Developing a Customer Relations System is essential if we are to successfully grow our user base, and develop a dialogue with our regular users to increase revenue.

#### **2.4.3 Our decision making systems are internally focused**

Our decision making processes tend to be internally focused and we need to develop more participatory methodologies in order to provide frameworks which further include people and communities in Wales in our work. In the short term we will focus on engaging young people through the Hands on Heritage - Kick the Dust (Heritage Lottery Fund) Programme and ensure that young people have a voice in our events programming process. We also need to develop a more outward facing Events Strategy working with stakeholders and partners to diversify the content of our programmes.

#### **2.4.4. Each Museum is different with limitations in terms of site infrastructure**

A number of our museums lack the infrastructure required to support an ambitious events programme and income generation aspirations. For example the wifi connectivity varies as does technical provision and storage capacity. Parking capacity continues to be an issue at St Fagans and there are accessibility challenges at several of our museums. Another area of improvement already highlighted in the Visitor Experience Strategy, is a need for improved signage.

### 2.4.5. We lack rigorous evaluation systems

Very little evaluation has been done on our work. Developing our staff skills, expertise and confidence in this area is important. The Action Plan details how and when an evaluation framework will be developed to inform our events programming.

### 2.5. How this strategy was developed

A series of workshops were held across Amgueddfa Cymru to engage staff from all departments and museums in the development of the strategy - 32% of Amgueddfa Cymru staff participated in these workshops (see Appendix 1 for a full list). Their input has helped shape the thinking and the objectives set out in the Action Plan.

Detailed conversations were undertaken with a range of staff and stakeholders to help to support the development of this strategy and provide expertise from departments key to delivering events at Amgueddfa Cymru. The strategy has also been informed by the following Amgueddfa Cymru strategies and policies: Equality Strategy, Community Engagement Strategy, Collections Development Strategy, Exhibitions Policy; Visitor Experience Strategy, Learning & Participation Strategy. See Appendix 2 for a list of publications used to inform this strategy.

## 3. Aims and Objectives

In implementing this strategy we are working towards five strategic aims. In order to fulfil these aims a range of objectives will need to be addressed. These are outlined here and the actions against each one detailed in an associated Action Plan.

<b>Aim 1: Establish Amgueddfa Cymru as a destination for engaging, educational and entertaining bilingual events</b>		
Vision Commitment: Experience	Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Develop and deliver a programme of high profile one-off or recurring events</li></ul>
Vision Commitment: Experience	Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Develop, deliver and host Community celebrations and events</li></ul>

Vision Commitment: Experience	Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop, deliver and host National campaigns and events</li> </ul>
Vision Commitment: Learn	Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop, deliver and host an events programme to support learning</li> </ul>
<b>Aim 2: Increase the income generated through events</b>		
Vision Commitment: Prosper	Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure best practice in business planning</li> </ul>
<b>Aim 3: Establish Amgueddfa Cymru's brand as an event provider</b>		
Vision Commitment: Prosper	Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effectively promote our events programmes</li> </ul>
<b>Aim 4: Maintain and share good practice in terms of event management and delivery</b>		
Vision Commitment: Prosper	Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop policies and share best practice</li> </ul>
Vision Commitment: Participate	Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish methods of supporting people and communities to engage in decision-making processes</li> </ul>

The Action Plan will be delivered, between 2018-23. The actions have been considered within the available resources in terms of staff time and budgets.

## 4. Conclusions

This strategy provides a five year plan for the development and delivery of events. It is aspirational with the ambition to establish Amgueddfa Cymru as a destination for engaging, educational and entertaining events. This will enhance our reputation as a major event provider in Wales. It provides clarity of purpose and actions to diversify and increase audiences and support public participation. In line with Amgueddfa Cymru's five year income plan, it provides effective ways of utilising resources to increase and diversify income streams through the events programme.

## **Appendix 1: Staff involved in workshops**

Staff from across all departments were involved in the following workshops:

- Event Planning Workshops (July 2017 – NMC, SFNMH, NRLM)
- Departmental Q&A Sessions (October 2017)
- Criteria Workshop (December 2017)
- Programming Group Consultation (April 2018)
- Event Programming Consultation (April/May 2018– NWMS, NSM, Big Pit, NWM)
- Task & Finish Group Workshop (April 2018)

## **Appendix 2: Literature review used to develop the strategy**

Elaine Heumann Gurian, 'Civilising the Museum' 2006

Green, L. 2017. 'Why Don't They Come? Visitors on Low Income and the Myths around Admission Price'

Coleen Dillenschneider, 'Know Your Own Bone', blog and website

Nina Simon, 'The Art of Relevance'

From Happy Hours To Fun Runs: How To Successfully Diversify The Visitor Experience (DATA)

Hubs for Human Connection: The Social Role of Cultural Organizations (DATA)

Admission Price is NOT a Primary Barrier for Cultural Center Visitation (DATA)

### 3 Important Lessons I Learned at my First Full-Time Museum Job

Culture 24 'A Culture of Lates', A report into the historic, current and potential role of UK museum Lates within the context of the night-time economy

Welsh Government's Major Event Strategy For Wales (2010-20)

Welsh Language Policy <https://museum.wales/about/policy/welsh-language-policy/>