



ACTIVE MUSIC SERVICES

Music Consultancy & Choral Music Centre

**Senior Consultant: Dinah Pye AGSM, Dip. Ed, CFPS
Welsh Woman of the Year Winner**

Bethan Sayed
Chair of Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
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CF99 1NA

3.7.18

Dear Bethan

Following our telephone conversation on 25th June I appreciate that, as I was otherwise engaged for three years reopening the Cynon Valley Museum and missed the initial consultation, that there is still an opportunity to respond to the Committee's report "Hitting the right notes".

Previous to the report I had meetings with Kirsty Williams, Chair of WLGA, WLGA officers, Chair of CAGAC, Chair & members of the Music Education Council, Bethan Sayed, Arts Policy officers covering Arts & Education as well as correspondence with Lord Elis-Thomas.

The Cultural Committee's report is a welcome comprehensive snapshot regarding the present delivery of music across Wales and reflects my investigations since June 2017.

I worked with Helena Braithwaite MBE from the end of the 1980s and we tried various ways of keeping the music services financially viable. From 1999 to 2004 the ring fenced Music Development Fund had a significant impact until it was reduced then finally lost in transfer to the Revenue Support Fund.

I have read the report several times and there are numerous issues with some solutions but the priorities that need to be addressed as soon as possible are:-

* I have written to Mark Drakeford to inform him that there is complete confusion about the £2 million in the Budget agreed with Plaid Cymru and what it is to be used for. The Task & Finish group produced a tremendous amount of work on a way forward over three years ago and still no outcome agreed whilst, due to a lack of leadership, councils continue to cut services, graduate musicians are being reduced to instructor pay or made redundant. An urgent decision

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is required in order to release this money to a suitable organisation either to develop a way forward or to assist the young musicians stuck in the Government's Pyramid Structure for Music that is now dysfunctional due to the ineffective move of National Youth Arts from the WJEC. Bright musicians are losing out because they cannot afford the creeping privatisation being introduced. Those that should have the loudest shout for this money are the Cultural Committee, Plaid Cymru and CAGAC and not arts or education organisations that have not proved in the past to understand the intricacies of developing instrumental and choral skills and techniques.

- * The Government's Pyramid Structure for Music Education covers all aspects of learning from early years up to the specialised domain that has recently been removed from WJEC with a serious effect on access, removal of "entitlement" that was originally fought for in the Music Development Fund but more seriously contradicts the Arts Policy and the Education Policy featured on the Welsh Government website.
- * The Welsh Assembly **MUST** accept the Cultural report and I have written to several Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers to request their support for an urgent debate as soon as possible after the summer recess to discuss a sustainable Welsh National Plan for Music that covers the progression in the Government's Pyramid Structure for Music intact under one Cabinet Secretary portfolio.

I can confirm that England has a clear and well-funded National Plan for music while Scotland and NI are well ahead with developing crucial strategies to keep their music services sustainable. What is extremely sad and frustrating is that following notable efforts from numerous sources the vision for music education in Wales continues to be patchy, cloudy and in some cases non-existent and well behind other nations. Wales, as a musical nation, has a lot to lose and decisions have been made or not being made that leaves Wales well behind the rest of the UK.

"Hitting the right note" contains compelling evidence that the Welsh Government not only "took their eye off the ball" with regard to education but never even glanced at the decline in music provision since 2005. I am well aware of the extreme austerity affecting the Government and local councils as well as the possibility of reduced council partnerships in the future but I will remain critical of the lack of leadership, lack of respect for music's contribution to the economy and the growing perception that music has been taken for granted in Wales for too long. I will do everything I can to support the Committee in turning the present situation around.

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I wish to thank yourself and the members of the committee for the time you have given to this important report and I trust as the Chair you may be able to find time in your busy schedule to continue to look at this growing crisis with your colleagues and as you yourself said in an interview, before it is too late.

I have attached a copy of my CV to the email for the committee to acquaint themselves with who I am.

Yours sincerely

Dinah Pye

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