

Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee

Inquiry into the Welsh Government's Historic Environment Policy

Response from Rory Wilson

Dear Sir/Madam

INQUIRY INTO THE WELSH GOVERNMENT'S HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT POLICY

In response to your letter dated 31st May 2012 inviting consultation response, I wish to comment as follows.

Through my professional involvement with both Cadw and RCAHMW, I have in the past found both bodies to be highly professional and that they put conservation of the historic environment at the heart of their mission.

However, over the past year or two, it has appears to me that Cadw's focus has noticeably changed in favour of tourism/visitors, gift shops, and the like.

Cadw has, it is my understating and observation, shed and not replaced highly experienced conservation professionals. My concern now is that if Cadw and RCAHMW are merged then a similar fate would befall the Royal Commission.

Whilst I fully accept the need to encourage and provide for visitors, including enhancing the understanding and educational experience, this should not be at the expense of world-class conservation ability on which the future of our Welsh historic buildings and sites rest so critically.

The legacy we leave those who come after us should not be compromised by short-term gain and social foibles.

In this connection, with many local authorities having no Conservation Officer (including ours – Ceredigion County Council) lost expertise at Cadw is of even greater concern. To degrade RCAHMW also would be grave.