

Welsh Parliament

**Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and
International Relations Committee**

Pre-appointment hearing

The Welsh Government's preferred
candidate for Chair of Amgueddfa
Cymru

July 2023



1. Introduction

Pre-appointment hearings

1. Welsh Ministers make a range of public appointments across all aspects of public life. These appointments are high profile and offer the opportunity to shape and inform many of the public services accessed by the people of Wales. Welsh Ministers must make regulated public appointments in accordance with the principles set out in the Governance Code on Public Appointments¹. The Commissioner for Public Appointments² is responsible for providing independent assurance that appointments comply with the Code.
2. Welsh Ministers and the Senedd have agreed to introduce pre-appointment scrutiny by Senedd committees of certain public appointments which are of significant public interest or which will have a significant impact on the public. The aim is to further improve the scrutiny and transparency of the public appointment making process. Pre-appointment scrutiny takes the form of a public pre-appointment hearing with the preferred candidate. For appointments to these agreed roles, it is for the relevant committee to decide whether it wishes to carry out a pre-appointment hearing.
3. A list of ministerial appointments that may be subject to pre-appointment hearings has been approved by the Welsh Government and will be reviewed regularly. The Chair of Amgueddfa Cymru is included on that list.

Amgueddfa Cymru

4. Established by Royal Charter in 1907, Amgueddfa Cymru is a charity comprising a network of seven museum and one collections centre located across Wales. The majority of Amgueddfa Cymru's funding comes as Grant-in-Aid from the Welsh Government, which it should spend in accordance with a remit letter³ issued by the then Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, and Chief Whip. In 2023-24, Amgueddfa Cymru's revenue funding is £26.9 million.
5. Amgueddfa Cymru's core objective, set out in the Royal Charter, is 'the advancement of the education of the public' involving developing, caring for,

¹ <https://www.gov.wales/public-appointments>

² <https://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/>

³ <https://museum.wales/remit-letter/>

studying and sustaining access to collections for the benefit of society in perpetuity. The Royal Charter states that this is to be achieved by the:

- comprehensive representation of science, art, industry, history and culture of, or relevant to, Wales; and
- collection, recording, preservation, elucidation and presentation of objects and things, and associated knowledge, whether connected or not with Wales, which are calculated to further the enhancement of understanding and the promotion of research.

6. Amgueddfa Cymru has a Board of Trustees whose role is to set the strategic direction of the organisation and ensure proper governance and management of its resources. The Board of Trustees meets on a regular basis, in public, to conduct its business. Members of the Board of Trustees are appointed by the Welsh Government and Amgueddfa Cymru as set out in its supplemental Royal Charter and statutes⁴, and in accordance with the principles of open selection as recommended by the Nolan Review.

7. Amgueddfa Cymru has a corporate strategy to 2030⁵, supported by a 5 year business plan⁶ covering the period 2021-2026. Each year, an operational plan⁷ is also published outlining detailed plans for the financial year ahead in response to the remit letter.

2. The recruitment process

8. On 10 March 2023, the Welsh Government's Public Bodies Unit (PBU) advertised the role of Chair of Amgueddfa Cymru.

9. The Welsh Government circulated details of the appointment through stakeholder lists held by the PBU, and posted the vacancy on the Welsh Government's public appointments website and the UK Cabinet Office's website.

10. The vacancy was promoted using the following social media channels and advertised through the media listed below:

- Diversity Jobsite Network

⁴ <https://museum.wales/charter-and-statutes/>

⁵ <https://museum.wales/about/policy/strategy-2030/>

⁶ <https://museum.wales/aims/5-year-business-plan-2021-2026/>

⁷ <https://museum.wales/our-plans/operational-plan-2022-2023/>

- Fish4jobs
- Black Young Professionals
- Women on Board
- The Guardian
- Museums Association
- Museum Next
- Safle Swyddi
- Lleol

11. The applications closed on 11 April 2023. Of the nine applications received, the Welsh Government's Assessment Advisory Panel invited four candidates to attend a formal interview. The interviews were held between 23 and 26 May 2023, following which the Assessment Advisory Panel considered there to be three appointable candidates.

Role and person specification

12. The Chair of Amgueddfa Cymru will be accountable to the Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport, and Tourism and may also be held to account by the Welsh Parliament for the performance of the Board of Trustees and its effective governance. Detailed responsibilities for the Chair of Amgueddfa Cymru can be found in the information pack for applicants⁸.

3. The Welsh Government's preferred candidate

13. The Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport, and Tourism's preferred candidate for the post of Chair of Amgueddfa Cymru is Kate Eden.

14. Kate Eden is a non-executive director with seventeen years of experience in private industry at senior management level, both in the UK and internationally. Her experience in public affairs, policy and strategic communication was gained working largely in the pharmaceutical sector. Kate Eden became a Board

⁸ <https://business.senedd.wales/documents/s138283/Information%20pack%20for%20applicants.pdf>

Member of the Arts Council of Wales in April 2017, and has been Vice Chair since March 2021. Kate Eden is also an Independent Member and Vice Chair of the Board at Public Health Wales NHS Trust, Chair of the Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee, and an Independent Member of Aberystwyth University Council. Kate Eden was born and brought up in north Wales, attending the Alun School in Mold before studying Social and Political Sciences at King's College, Cambridge. She now lives in the Brecon Beacons and is learning Welsh at Coleg Gwent.

Conflict of interest

15. It should be noted that, on application, Kate Eden declared her roles as the Vice Chair of the Arts Council of Wales and Independent Member of Aberystwyth University Council as having potential conflicts of interest.

16. The Assessment Advisory Panel did not comment on the declaration made.

4. The pre-appointment hearing

Before the hearing

17. In advance of the pre-appointment hearing, the Welsh Government's PBU provided the Committee with:

- a briefing⁹ summarising the recruitment process
- the diversity data¹⁰ of the candidates who applied for the post
- the information pack¹¹ given to applicants for the post.

18. The preferred candidate's application form, CV, and personal statement were also shared privately with the Committee.

19. The Committee asked the preferred candidate to complete a short questionnaire¹² in advance of the hearing to inform Members' questioning.

⁹ <https://business.senedd.wales/documents/s138284/Welsh%20Government%20Briefing.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://business.senedd.wales/documents/s138285/Diversity%20data%20of%20candidates.pdf>

¹¹ <https://business.senedd.wales/documents/s138283/Information%20pack%20for%20applicants.pdf>

¹² <https://business.senedd.wales/documents/s138280/Pre-appointment%20hearing%20questionnaire.pdf>

The hearing

20. The hearing took place on 12 July 2023¹³. The preferred candidate was asked a range of questions about how they intend to fulfil the role of Chair of Amgueddfa Cymru. These questions explored in further detail the information provided in their written questionnaire, and covered matters including:

- their motivation for applying for the role
- their knowledge, experience, and suitability for the role
- measuring the success of their future work
- the role's independence from the Welsh Government and scrutiny.

5. The Committee's view

21. In line with the guidance on pre-appointment hearings¹⁴ agreed between the Welsh Government and the Senedd, the Committee's role is to set out its views on the suitability of the Welsh Government's preferred candidate.

22. We were impressed with Kate Eden's strong commitment and her preparedness to advocate for Amgueddfa Cymru's needs and navigate the difficult decisions that will have to be made as public funding pressures continue. We welcome her collaborative approach to leadership and her comments on further widening participation in Amgueddfa Cymru's work.

23. We were also pleased to note that Kate Eden had already considered her position as Vice Chair of the Arts Council of Wales. Her willingness to step down and remove this potential conflict of interest in her new role is commendable. This gives us confidence that any future potential conflicts of interest will be managed appropriately.

24. Based on her written answers to the Committee's questionnaire and her responses during the pre-appointment hearing, we see no reason that Kate Eden should not be appointed as Chair of Amgueddfa Cymru.

25. Subject to the appointment of the preferred candidate by the Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport, and Tourism, we look forward to inviting the proposed Chair to attend a future Committee meeting as part of the ongoing programme

¹³ <https://record.senedd.wales/Committee/13395>

¹⁴ <https://business.senedd.wales/mgIssueHistory/Home.aspx?!!d=39109>

of scrutiny of statutory commissioners and public bodies that fall within our
remit.