

2014

Freedom of Information Request

Reference number – 14-002

Information relating to archaeological digs

Could you tell me how the Museum of Wales would prioritise proposed archaeological digs and email me copies of those evaluations for all the digs carried out in Wales over the last two years please?

Reference no.: 14-002

06 March 2014

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION – *Information relating archaeological digs*

Thank you for your request for information. As Museum Secretary for Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales ('the Museum'), I am responsible for responding to your request for information.

I refer to your email of 9 February 2014, in which you asked for the following information:

Could you tell me how the Museum of Wales would prioritise proposed archaeological digs and email me copies of those evaluations for all the digs carried out in Wales over the last two years please?

Response

Please find below the Museum's response to your request.

Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales undertakes:

1. Small scale and rapid response interventions to investigate selective treasure discoveries, during the course of fulfilling our statutory role in advising upon Treasure discoveries.
2. Select excavation across Wales for research purposes. The intensity of this excavation programme will vary from year to year.

1. Treasure Act fieldwork

This fieldwork fulfils our statutory role in advising on potential Treasure cases. In all cases, a report is prepared by the relevant specialist at Amgueddfa Cymru for the coroner, who is required to hold an inquest only in those cases where a museum wishes to acquire the find. Small-scale interventions are undertaken to investigate selective potential treasure discoveries are rapid responses to unexpected discovery, for which the PAS Scheme and Amgueddfa Cymru have small annual resource allocations to cover costs. These responses form part of Amgueddfa Cymru's statutory role in advising Her Majesty's Coroners on cases of possible Treasure in Wales, and are needed for reports intended to be submitted for inquest. These investigations are undertaken where it is clear that finders are still able to accurately relocate find-spots soon after discovery. They usually take the form of 1-2

days of fieldwork, survey and recording, involving two archaeology staff, finders and a volunteer. The investigations are usually approved by memorandum, and fieldwork priorities are to secure accurate provenance for discoveries, to inform curators of the manner of original burial and to check that no further potential treasure finds remain in the ground.

2. Larger-scale fieldwork

We pursue targeted research directly related to Amgueddfa Cymru's collections and learning needs, yet framed in relation to wider research agendas, priorities, weaknesses in understanding, and responsive to discoveries and collaborative opportunities. Amgueddfa Cymru's core objective is *'the advancement of the education of the public'*, including Archaeology and History. Learning is at the heart of everything carried out by Amgueddfa Cymru and in working towards its Vision for *"a world-class museum of learning"*, it is constantly developing new ways to bring its collections to life so that more people can enjoy and interact with them. It is the primary body in Wales for the investigation and interpretation of archaeological artefacts and material culture, and through this, an understanding of the ancient peoples of Wales. Targeted research excavation is a primary method of providing archaeological context for the national collections, revealing inspiring stories and high-quality information about people, objects and places.

Priorities for excavation are framed by the following documents:

- National Research Framework for the Archaeology in Wales www.archaeoleg.org.uk
- Amgueddfa Cymru's Vision and Vision Map 2013/16 <http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/visionmap/>
- Annual Operational Plan <http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/4051/>

Each project has been defined by its research design, which allows the planned, rational and efficient control of the research process. Research agendas have helped to define the target locations, including the sites to be investigated, and some of these projects have been co-developed with partners. For example, the decision to excavate at Cathole Cave, Gower during July 2012, was as a response to a heritage management issue and an invitation from Cadw, and the excavation priorities were developed as a partnership between Cadw, Forestry Commission Wales and Amgueddfa Cymru.

Your request was considered according to the principles set out in the National Assembly's Code of Practice on Public Access to Information (third edition). The Code is published on the Internet at www.information.wales.gov.uk.

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, you should write to the Director Finance and Corporate Resources at the following address:

Mr. Neil Wicks
Director of Finance and Corporate Resources
Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NP

When dealing with any concerns, we will follow the principles of the National Museum of Wales's Code of Practice on Complaints, which is available on our website at www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/45/.

Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) if you are not content with the outcome of your complaint or review. Generally, the ICO will not make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the Museum.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

If you have any further queries or concerns then please contact me via my email address.

Yours sincerely

Elaine Cabuts
Museum Secretary