

Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales Report to the President, July 2013

Review of the Trustees' involvement in Our Museum

Introduction

Four of the Museum's Trustees were invited to participate in Our Museum (OM). This Paul Hamlyn Foundation-funded programme seeks to enable the Museum to develop its volunteering offer, firstly at St Fagans, and then impact on the Museum's operations as a whole.

Trustees Carole-Anne Davies, Miriam Griffiths and Glenda Jones were able to participate in the meetings with the Community Partners and staff:

18 December 2012	Carole-Anne, Miriam and Glenda
14 February 2013	Carole-Anne
18 April 2013	Miriam
10 June 2013	Glenda

Due to an unfortunate misunderstanding, Keshav Singhal, who had also volunteered to contribute, was unable to attend his allocated meeting on 18 April. Keshav has therefore not submitted a response to the survey.

In order to evaluate the impact of their involvement we submitted three questionnaires, to the **Trustees**, **Community Partners** and **Engagement Team i.e. staff**. Their full responses are set out in Appendix 1. How their contribution has impacted on OM's objectives is set out in Appendix 2. The key project staff working for and with the Paul Hamlyn Foundation will similarly be canvassed for their views, and it is appropriate that we do this through the next Annual Evaluation Event in October.

Key Findings across the Trustees, Community Partners and Engagement Team

Continuation

- All respondents wished that the four Trustees continued their engagement

View of Trustees' contribution from Community Partners and Engagement Team

- Supportive of the Community Partners and the Engagement Team
- Strategic focus
- Brings integrity and credibility
- Advocates for OM within Amgueddfa Cymru and beyond to help deliver culture change
- Involvement is a positive reflection on the Museum
- Provided different views / perspectives
- Quality of their contribution
- Keeness
- They are volunteers

Gained most from their involvement

- Trustees: having direct involvement with staff and volunteers; increased knowledge and understanding

- Community Partners: richer experience; more thought-provoking discussions; adds to kaleidoscope of ideas; deeper understanding of value of own Trustees; guidance and support; brings OM into the heart of St Fagans
- Engagement Team: their enthusiasm, commitment, insight, encouragement, support, advice and individual expertise in social and political context

Trustees' greatest contribution

- Trustees: being open and honest as a lay person; bringing Board level view; affirmation of the project and feeding back to the Board; bridging and connecting
- Engagement Team: forming supportive relationships; new ways of working recognised

Any additionality required from here on?

- Trustees: wished to see the volunteers at work on site, in addition to attending meetings; meet with Paul Hamlyn Foundation
- Community Partners: wished to have more direction from them; learn more about them and their role
- Engagement Team: develop advocacy role more in delivering key messages to internal and external stakeholders; take part in activities and annual Peer Review; attend our visits to other organisations / institutions involved in OM

Sharing with other Trustees

- Trustees: 2 out of 3 happy to step aside to enable others to experience; one keen to stay involved; share experience with other Trustees
- Community Partners and Engagement Team: same 4 to stay for continuity

Additional support needed

- Trustees - Refresher meeting before next phase

Additional comments

- Trustees expressed gratitude to all involved. Special thanks to Nia and Loveday – delivering a very uplifting experience personally; need to review their involvement with group communications system.
- Staff know more about the Trustees – warm, approachable and supportive individuals who have demonstrated commitment.

Next steps

- The dates for the next 5 meetings have been set, and offer opportunities for the Trustees to engage in further dialogue with the Community Partners and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.
- Volunteering events are being organised and these can be promoted to the Trustees.
- The Trustee training event on 15 October will offer them a focused opportunity to feedback to the other Trustees.
- Meetings with other OM organisations are also being planned and these can be promoted to the Trustees.
- We will review their access to the communications system established for the group.
- We will arrange a catch-up and review meeting with the four Trustees.

Elaine Cabuts

Museum Secretary

August 2013

Appendix 1

Questions asked of the Trustees, the Community Partners and Staff

Not all questions were asked of all three groups

Trustee response	Community Partner response	Staff response
<p>Q. In what ways do you feel the Museum's Trustees have contributed to (a) the project (b) your understanding of Amgueddfa Cymru?</p>		
	<p>They've brought another set of views to the work we're doing, from three very different backgrounds and areas of interest. And although I've always been aware of how important this work is, I have to confess by being extra-impressed when I discovered more about the trustees and their role, and the fact that they were keen to be involved. And the quality of their contributions reflects on the national museum and the important role that it plays in the cultural life of Wales.</p> <p>I am always happy to see the trustees at our museum meetings. I feel like they give good feedback, explain anything we may be unsure of and are very supportive of the community partners.</p> <p>It's been great to get another perspective and an insight from another group of volunteers operating in a very different capacity.</p>	<p>We feel that the Trustees have brought a level of integrity and credibility to our way of working. They are volunteers themselves and have an overview of Amgueddfa Cymru. They ensure that the messages central to Our Museum are promoted throughout the institution and further in their specific communities and areas of specialisation.</p> <p>We feel that the Trustees involvement in Our Museum has supported the Engagement Team to understand and consider the structure and nature of Amgueddfa Cymru as a whole and the place of St Fagans within that structure and the role Our Museum has to play in delivering a culture change.</p>

Q. What's the one thing you have gained most from your / the Trustees' involvement?		
<p>Having direct involvement with staff and volunteer organisations</p> <p>Knowledge and understanding about what the Museum can do for/with volunteers in terms of communication, partnership and developmental work, based on learning a lot about what volunteers say they want/can gain from the Museum.</p> <p>Deeper insight into Our Museum and the richness of experience we can offer</p>	<p>A richer experience, due to the value of their contributions, and more thought-provoking discussions! I think part of the reason this work is so successful is the kaleidoscope of colours that we all bring, and they add extra ones. I've also gained a deeper understanding of the role of trustees within organisations (which, working for a charity, I probably should have known already, but better late than never)</p> <p>It's nice to have some guidance, support and clarification. The trustees always bring this wealth of knowledge to the meetings.</p> <p>I think that is it great that they come to the meetings with their own perspective and enter into our discussions. Also it really brings the Our Museum project into the heart of St Fagans</p>	<p>As a group the Engagement Team has gained four highly enthusiastic and committed members through the Trustees. We have gained from their insight, encouragement and support. We have also gained from their individual expertise in fields such as local and national politics, education, communications, media and diverse community groups. This has helped us develop dialogue around these key subjects and given us a source of advice when we have needed it.</p>
Q. What do you feel has been your / their greatest contribution?		
<p>Being able to be open and honest about ideas and giving a 'lay' perspective on issues</p> <p>Bringing a Board level view and affirmation to the project and feeding back to the Board about the project.</p> <p>I wonder if our role is as much about bridging / connecting as anything else. The team and the partner organisations are doing all the vital stuff!</p>		<p>Forming supportive relationships between Trustees, Community Partners and staff.</p> <p>The encouragement and support the Trustees have shown during the period of their involvement.</p> <p>Recognising the importance of introducing new ways of working.</p>

Q. What has surprised you?		
<p>The amount of collaboration that is happening</p> <p>The time, effort and commitment the Volunteer Co-ordinators from other organisations have been able to put into the Project</p> <p>That we seem to find new ways to draw more from our services and collections – more creative each time. We should always be aware of resources and capacity of course, but the team are enthusiastic and inventive – they surprise us constantly.</p>		<p>The popularity of the initiative among the Trustees and the high number of Trustees who volunteered to take part.</p> <p>The Trustees seem to really enjoy the open dialogue approach in our workshops and meetings.</p>
Q. What have you enjoyed?		
<p>Meeting and Working with museum staff and learning more about volunteer organizations</p> <p>Seeing things from a Volunteer's perspective. Excellent partnership environment. The creativity and buzz that arises from the coming-together of Museum people and other people who are engaged in the project.</p> <p>The quality of discussing new perspectives and range of ideas emerging through the partnership</p>		

Q. Would you like your / their involvement to continue?		
<p>Yes, time permitting</p> <p>Yes - but see 8 below</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes please</p> <p>Absolutely. I think it's very valuable.</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes. We feel that the Trustees have played a key role in the development of Our Museum over the past year and would like to see their involvement continue and their roles on the Engagement Team develop. This will become even more vital in years 2 and 3 when we consider ways of sharing the lessons learnt across the organisation. In the interests of continuity we feel that the same four Trustees should remain as Trustee representatives on the Our Museum Engagement Team. Keshav Singhal has been less involved than the other three. We would like to remain in close contact with the whole board via the Trustees on the team and through Elaine Cabuts, Museum Secretary.</p>
Q. If so, would you like it to be along the same lines, or something different?		
<p>I would be happy for it to continue along similar lines, however, it would also be good to see the volunteers 'at work'</p> <p>The same lines but perhaps also a session with volunteers (eg a visit to meet some of them when they are active on site anyway - not a set up meeting) as well as continuing to meet with the voluntary organisations' staff. Happy to try other forms of engagement suggested by the Project. Would appreciate meeting someone from PHF if that possibility arises.</p> <p>Try me! Given time and a good brief I'll have a go at anything!</p>		<p>We feel the role of the Trustees as advocates for the initiative should still play a central part of their involvement in Our Museum. They support us in taking key messages across the institution and throughout the cultural arts and heritage sector. We would like to see this role of advocate develop further and ensure that Our Museum is high on the agenda for internal and external discussions between the Trustees and different stake holders.</p>

Q. If different, how?		
<p>See above</p> <p>Not sure – see above. Happy to be guided by the team.</p>	<p>I'd like to see them continue to be comfortable in expressing their thoughts with the rest of the group. I'm not sure how the rest of us are going to develop our contributions in the next couple of years: that's what makes it so interesting!</p> <p>I'd like to hear more of their thoughts on things and some more direction.</p> <p>I would be interested to understand more about the trustees and what their role involves. Other than that I think it is about their continued support and interest in the project</p>	<p>We would like to encourage them to actively take part in the events and support offered through the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and Dovetail, such as the annual Peer Review. We would also like to encourage the Trustees to attend visits with us to other organisations taking part in Our Museum, so they are able to benefit from the sharing of experiences and best practice between institutions and communities.</p>
Q. Or would you like to step aside / them to step aside and offer this opportunity to another Trustee?		
<p>Would be more than happy too to step aside in order for another Trustee to witness the same experience</p> <p>I would be happy to do that if another trustee wants the experience, for the sake of broadening Board involvement/awareness - which I would advocate</p> <p>No! Not a chance!</p>	<p>If they're happy to continue, I'm happy with the ones we have already</p> <p>I feel that we have built up a great rapport with the trustees and it would be a shame if we didn't continue the good work that has been achieved with their help.</p> <p>To echo what has been said it would be shame to lose the relationships we have already built although I can see a benefit in ensuring that the other trustees have an understanding of the project</p>	<p>We would like to encourage the Trustees to continue their involvement with the Our Museum Engagement Team, at meetings, events and conferences.</p>

Q. Is there any additional support you would like us to provide?		
<p>Support has been good and sufficient</p> <p>Happy with support so far. (I have the advantage of having worked in and with the voluntary sector in the past so felt comfortable from the start with the ethos and aims)</p> <p>Maybe a catch-up coffee before the next stage and a reminder / refresher of focus for Trustees for the next steps.</p>		<p>We hope to support the Trustees through offering dedicated training and development days around Our Museum and through their continued participation on the Our Museum Engagement Team. We would also like to encourage them to keep in touch, ask questions and challenge us when they feel it is required.</p>
Q. Is there anything else you would like to add?		
<p>Yes, my gratitude to all involved in the initiative. Special thanks need to be conveyed to Nia and Loveday - they're professionalism and positive attitude towards all involved in the project has enabled it to be a very uplifting experience for me and will serve Amgueddfa Cymru well.</p> <p>I'm struggling a little with the group technology [Teamwork] – for Trustees I'm not sure if its' that helpful.</p>		
Q. What have you learned about our Trustees that you didn't know before?		
		<p>That they are warm, approachable and supportive individuals and when they commit to something that commitment is clearly evident.</p>

Appendix 2

Our Museum Objectives

Staff also noted how the Trustees' contribution had impacted upon the Our Museum's overall objectives of the initiative and the Museum's own strategic objectives and annual milestones:

- They have helped to keep us focused and maintain momentum.
- They have assisted us with the development of our evaluation and reporting process.
- They have brought in expert knowledge in areas such as training, accreditation and development.
- They have acted as advocates for the initiative and taken the key messages linked to the overall Our Museum objective and our own strategic objectives across the Museum and further.
- They have, at times acted as Critical Friends and challenged us to reflect on our course of action before implementing decisions.

The desired **outcomes** and **strategic objectives** of Our Museum are:

PHF Our Museum Outcomes	St Fagans Strategic Objectives for Our Museum
Rooted in local needs	Achieve a culture change in skills development and working practices in order to broaden the volunteer base and embed opportunities for volunteers in all aspects of the Museum's work
Community agency	Building a community of volunteers at St Fagans based on the needs of the volunteer, not the Museum
Capability building	Ensuring that meeting the needs of users is the responsibility of all Museum staff
Reflection	Ensuring that opportunities for learning are embedded throughout our work

The project's year 1 Our Museum milestones have been

- Milestone 1: Structure for co working developed jointly and formally
- Milestone 2: Establish a structure for keeping a journal
- Milestone 3: Appoint Our Museum Coordinator
- Milestone 4: Develop and Implement a joint training programme
- Milestone 5: Trustees and Champions