

# The Nation's Memory: Informing the Future

Strategic Plan 2017–2021











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Cover photo: Man and Horse in Desert, Patagonia; Sir Kyffin Williams

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National Library volunteers and staff with the President and Librarian after winning the prestigious ARA Archive Volunteering Award for 2016.

# Foreword

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The National Library of Wales is one of Wales' most valued cultural institutions. As the memory of the nation, it ensures that Wales' history and heritage is safeguarded for the education and enjoyment of present and future generations. It also provides a wealth of information about the wider world.

As the Board of Trustees and Management of the Library, we will work with our dedicated staff to successfully deliver this ground breaking Strategic Plan to ensure that the Library remains at the forefront of new ways of opening up the national collections to all, wherever they live or work.

We look to actively contribute to national life and support the Welsh Government and other strategic partners in delivering services which enrich lives and benefit our communities across Wales. The Library serves the people of Wales in many ways, we encourage everyone to get involved and help us ensure that we deliver for all of Wales.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas  
President

Linda Tomos  
Librarian and Chief Executive



The National Library of Wales' purpose is to make our culture and heritage accessible to all to learn, research and enjoy







# Our Purpose

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Since its foundation in 1907, the National Library of Wales has continued to collect and preserve Wales' documentary heritage and pioneer new ways of enabling wider access to our rich national collections. The National Library's founding purpose and vision was to ensure that Wales' unique history, culture and heritage, which is documented in many different formats and media over time, will always be available to better understand who we are, to explain our shared historical and cultural legacy which has shaped us as a nation over many centuries, and to encourage research and learning. Our collections are also an important source of knowledge about the wider world, both historically and for contemporary society.

This vast treasure house of books, manuscripts, archives, maps, pictures, photographs, newspapers, sound and film grows with each generation and the long-term management of the collections for the wellbeing of future generations requires careful and effective strategies and policies. The Library is responsible for over 20 million items with new material increasingly being acquired in digital formats. The expertise of staff to conserve, preserve, catalogue and interpret our collections is a vital element in ensuring long-term public access both in Wales and beyond.

The Strategic Plan for 2017-2021 provides a real opportunity to transform the Library in establishing a National Digital Library and

scoping a framework for a National Archive, using digital technology to ensure that more people are able to access their culture and heritage in ways that suit them. This Plan builds on the ambitious objectives of the previous 'Knowledge for All' plan (2014-2017), to widen access, improve expertise, increase collaboration, and demonstrate sustainability and forward thinking.

As a national cultural organisation, we must ensure people are aware of the services we deliver, reaching out, enriching lives, supporting learning and enhancing life chances. We will seek to maintain our accreditation under the Customer Service Excellence Standard, providing helpful support to our service users and visitors.

We will work with partners to make Wales' special and distinctive cultural heritage more visible beyond Wales. The Year of Legends in 2017 and the Year of the Sea in 2018, provides exciting and creative opportunities for the Library to contribute to the success of Wales' cultural tourism activities.

The Library will continue to care for the nation's rich tangible documentary heritage, pioneering new ways to preserve and manage collections and thereby make them available to the public. Working to develop the collections which record the culture of Wales, through donations and purchase, doubling the number of digital items to 10 million by 2021.



For the National Library of Wales to maintain its core purpose, to innovate and grow and to ensure that we effectively contribute to national life, based on a long-term commitment to meet the needs of the people of Wales for educational and cultural services







# Our 10 Year Vision

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The National Library of Wales is a national cultural organisation which has important responsibilities to acquire, manage and make available the national collections for the long-term. In providing a measure of continuity and stability in uncertain times, the Library is also committed to innovating and changing its approach to meet new demands and opportunities.

Our staff are a major asset in ensuring the high quality of our services and specialist advice. We will continue to invest in their needs to retain professional skills, acquire new skills and pass on their expertise to a new generation.

We face a major challenge in ensuring continued access to digital material over coming years. We will focus on developing a trusted digital repository as part of a National Digital Library and as part of a potential framework for a National Archive which will ensure that important information and knowledge is not lost to future generations.

We must ensure that the Library remains relevant to national life and that our activities, services and events reflect what the people of Wales need from us. We must ensure that our promotional work effectively describes what the

Library can do for a wide range of audiences and communities, including the Welsh diaspora beyond Wales who are able to enjoy our virtual activities and services. We must also ensure that the Library in whatever it does, makes a positive contribution to global well-being.

As a national cultural organisation, our strategic partnerships need to reflect where our work adds value to common goals and outcomes. We have particular strengths and expertise for cultural, historical and heritage matters, education and learning, digital information management and delivery, bilingual delivery and the Welsh language and other Celtic cultures. We also hold collections which reflect a world view and provide a broader understanding of life beyond Wales. We must continue to make this knowledge available for the long-term.

Our resilience as an organisation is largely dependent on the funding which we can attract. We must broaden the range and source of our income beyond our Grant In Aid from government in order to fulfil our potential as a dynamic, confident and relevant organisation which is valued and supported by people in Wales and beyond.









# Our Strategic Objectives 2017–2021



# Being Excellent Custodians of Our Collections

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Image from The Vaux Passional medieval manuscript (Peniarth MS 482D)

The National Library of Wales is the largest research library in Wales and is responsible for the custodianship of Wales' documentary heritage. A wide variety of skills and extensive experience is required to ensure that the national collections are professionally managed and secured for current and future generations.

It will be vital to use innovative ways to interest new audiences in the wide range of material for which we are custodians, including social media channels, where we can explain who we are and what we do to safeguard the nation's culture and heritage. We will review our external engagement strategy and invest in promoting our collections and services through a wide range of activities and events. This strategy will include refreshing our public spaces and increasing our digital promotional activities.



Groupe des Dames Negresses, Egypt, c.1875

In addition to our unparalleled foundation collections of manuscripts and early publications, and unique acquisitions in many formats over more than a century, we are also Wales's only Legal Deposit Library, working closely with the other five UK Legal Deposit Libraries. Under the Legal Deposit Libraries Act (2003), the National Library of Wales is able to request a copy of every book published in the UK, extended since 2013 to non-print (electronic) material.

The Library's founding collections have been extended over the last hundred years through legal deposit powers, donations and purchases. It now includes the National Screen and Sound Archive, the Welsh National Collection of Photography and the Welsh Political Archive. We will shortly take responsibility for the records of the National Assembly for Wales, led by professional archivists.



The Library is the memory of the nation, continuing to collect, manage and preserve over 20 million books, manuscripts, archives, maps, pictures, photographs, newspapers, sound and film.

We will ensure that national public, organisational and historical records will be accessible in Wales for future generations.

Working with partners in all sectors, we need to ensure that the collections inspire people to research and share new knowledge for the benefit of individuals, communities and businesses.

Our award-winning Volunteer Programme will continue to support individuals to improve their skills and confidence and contribute to our unique community. The success of recruiting over 1,000 digital volunteers for the Cynefin Programme will be built on through the development of a bilingual crowd-sourcing platform to enable people to contribute to volunteer projects from their own home.



John Speed's map of Wales 1610

We will:

- Maintain our core purpose as outlined in the Library's Charter to collect, preserve and give access to all forms of recorded knowledge, especially relating to Wales and the Welsh and other Celtic peoples for the benefit of the public, including those engaged in research and learning.
- Continue to acquire, catalogue, conserve and make available material for the benefit of our users and for future generations, increasingly via digital means.
- Establish an effective skills development programme for our staff, including specialist professional skills, customer facing services, conservation and preservation services.
- Through our digitisation programme, we will work with leading universities in Wales and beyond, supporting research projects in the humanities that deliver new ways of interpreting our collections to a wide range of audiences.
- We will extend the Volunteer Programme incorporating a crowd sourcing platform to increase opportunities for digital volunteers.
- We will provide a dynamic and exciting range of bilingual exhibitions and events that make the best use of our impressive public spaces, encourage new visitors and showcase our diverse, interesting and most important collections.



# Contributing to the Well-Being of Future Generations

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The National Library is a Welsh Government Sponsored Body and receives around £9.5m in annual revenue funding from the Welsh Government. The annual Remit Letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure outlines his key priorities for the Grant in Aid received from the Welsh Government each year. The Library is also a Royal Charter body and registered independent charity. Its management and operations are overseen by a Board of Trustees, publicly appointed by both the National Library and the Welsh Government and in accordance with the Supplemental Royal Charter 2006 and Registered Charity status. As a major national cultural institution, the Library has important responsibilities to plan for the long-term and secure its assets and physical estate.



The Strategic Plan represents a continuation of an ambitious agenda which will support national strategic objectives as well as working in partnership at the community level. For the first time, we will deliver our statutory duties under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to ensure that the quality of life for Welsh people is improved and sustained for future generations. This will include an active participation in outreach and educational activities across Wales, particularly in targeted areas where access to cultural activities is limited by deprivation or rural isolation. We will ensure that the Library, its Board and staff reflect and represent the diverse communities of Wales.

The Library's work and core purpose directly aligns with and contributes to the national well-being goal of 'A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language'. We will ensure that we effectively implement and maintain the level of Welsh language standards agreed with the Welsh



We welcome the opportunities provided by new responsibilities to safeguard the well-being of future generations through our work and to work in partnership with the Welsh Government to improve our services for the people of Wales.

Language Commissioner for the benefit of users and staff. We will actively seek to work with the Welsh Government to improve the delivery of high quality bilingual services across the public sector and contribute to the Welsh Government's ambitious objective to achieve 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050.

It will be vital to ensure that sufficient capacity and capability is available to deliver our services well and we will actively work with our Partnership Council to participate in national skills programmes such as apprenticeship schemes which strengthen our specialist skills and ensure opportunities for our staff to develop their careers.



We will:

- Successfully deliver the Welsh Government's priorities for our Grant In Aid as outlined in the annual Remit Letter.
- Effectively deliver the Library's duties under the 7 goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, with cohesive communities, more equal, healthier, more prosperous, resilient, and globally responsible.
- Deliver our statutory duties to meet the Welsh Language Standards agreed with the Welsh Language Commissioner and actively support the development of bilingual services across the public sector.
- Complete a major capital maintenance programme and implement an Asset Management Plan to ensure that our assets and physical estate are maintained and improved for the long-term.
- Actively develop a skills development programme, working with our Partnership Council, to maintain and develop specialist skills which could access opportunities provided by government schemes.



# Ensuring Long-Term Access to the National Collections



Yny Ihyvyr hwnn (1546); the first book to be printed in the Welsh language

This Strategic Plan acknowledges that the Library must plan for the long-term and establish a model which will ensure that digital technology strengthens every aspect of its work. We have pioneered many important aspects of digital management in libraries over the last 20 years. Using this knowledge and experience, we will implement a phased approach to establish the National Digital Library where all processes benefit from digital work flows and where bilingual services are delivered equally through our physical access points and over the Internet. The National Library will work in partnership with the Welsh Government to explore the opportunities for establishing a National Archive Framework in Wales and collaborate on scoping and feasibility work. We will aim to provide specific leadership to increase the amount of Welsh language material available online and to develop bilingual management of digital services.



Digitising the Boston Manuscript

Such an ambitious approach will require working with partners and demonstrating clear leadership in the sector in Wales. However, it also provides tremendous opportunities to innovate and establish working practices which provide opportunities for staff to acquire new skills, users to benefit from better access to our collections and libraries across Wales to be part of a national network of digital practice.

We will be led by the views of our users and staff in implementing a digitisation on demand model over the next 4 years. Our technical infrastructure, information management systems and user access



Working in partnership, this Strategic Plan will seek to establish and develop the bilingual National Digital Library and scope a framework for a National Archive for Wales, together with the National Broadcasting Archive, leading the sector with pioneering technology and innovative professional skills.

systems will all be reviewed to maximise the opportunities to deliver more efficiently and ensure that our technical approach is forward-looking.

A major issue in the Digital Age is the ability to access information in the long-term when technology is subject to rapid changes. For the Library, this is a vital aspect of our forward planning. We are committed to the establishment of a national trusted digital repository where information will be managed for long-term access. The Library is leading on a national strategy for digital preservation which will support all public sector organisations needing to keep information safe and accessible. Our feasibility work to establish a framework for a National Archive for Wales will be based on the opportunities provided by digital systems to design a very different approach to other national archives which were historically based on physical collections.

The Library will aim to progress an ambitious plan to establish the National Broadcast Archive, working with BBC Cymru Wales. This innovative approach will secure the BBC Cymru Wales archive for future generations and provide full digital access at 4 Digital Hubs located in Aberystwyth, Wrexham, Cardiff and Carmarthen. This plan will also aim to work with ITV Wales to include material in its archive already managed by the Library and with S4C to include its digital archive. The timescale to realise this plan will be dependent on the outcome of a major funding application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

We also acknowledge the importance of delivering digital services which our users will actively access. Our successful partnership with Wikimedia UK which has led to over 200 million views of images from our collections will be further developed and we shall work with partners to extend the Welsh-language Wikipedia and develop a Wicipop for contemporary music.

The Dictionary of Welsh Biography is a unique bilingual information service which serves as the authoritative source on Welsh lives. We will establish a new technical platform for the online service to enable more information in other formats such as visual images to be included and explore the potential for a version suitable for schools to support curriculum needs. Our existing support for the Hwb Platform for schools will be maintained and we will pro-actively seek funding to deliver new digital content and work with our digital volunteers to make more content visible from our collections.

Our ability to progress digital services will depend on available funding and staffing. We will investigate new services where we are able to recover the cost of creating and delivering digital copies whilst maintaining a commitment to our existing enquiry service and digital content services which are free at the point of delivery.









We will:

- Work collaboratively to establish and manage the National Digital Library, based on a coherent infrastructure and professional principles, as a long-term strategy.
- We will continue to modernise our digital services to facilitate new access routes and the use of our collections online, on external platforms and through the electronic resources in our reading rooms and digital hubs.
- We will complete scoping work for a potential framework to establish a National Archive for Wales.
- We will develop a national Digital Preservation Strategy for use by the public sector and support the creation of a National forum to exchange best practice as a collaborative venture.
- We will aim to establish a Trusted Digital Repository by 2021 for digital information in our care as part of a long-term policy initiative.
- We will establish the National Broadcast Archive, working in partnership with broadcasters, with digital access at 4 hubs across Wales when funding is secured.
- We will significantly increase the content available online and through our remote access points. We will aim to double the number of digital items to 10 million and double the number of our online users to 3 million by 2021.
- We will establish an effective digitisation on demand service for users where copyright issues permit, recovering the cost of producing the copy.
- We will investigate new digital delivery services where users can access an enhanced service for a charge to recover the delivery cost whilst maintaining a commitment to continue with our existing enquiry service which is free at the point of access.
- We will work with Historic Wales partners to develop our e-commerce services to improve the offer and develop an effective bilingual payments system.
- We will ensure that our digitisation programme includes a range of Welsh language content to support education and learning resources and the Welsh Government's policy objective to increase the number of Welsh language speakers.

# Being Central to National Cultural Life



Christmas Market in Oswestry, Geoff Charles

As stated in the Welsh Government's strategy, *'Light springs through the dark: A vision for culture in Wales'* (2016), engaging with cultural activity encourages citizens to re-connect and believe that they have a stake in Welsh society. We will proactively work with communities and other organisations to bring people together to celebrate and promote a shared interest in our heritage and history. We live in a technological world of rapid change. As a national cultural institution we can create cohesive partnerships, help people to find out about themselves and their communities, provide a sense of continuity, improving their confidence in the future. We will further develop our National Music Archive through cataloguing the Meredydd Evans and Phyllis Kinney archives and progress discussions with Bangor University and other universities with the aim of collaborating to offer student scholarships in the field of Welsh music.



Wikipedia Editathon at the Millennium Stadium

As Wales's largest library and archive, we are committed to supporting organisations in delivering coherent and sustainable services for Wales. This role includes our professional expertise in library and archive matters as well as broader roles to support digital skills, the Welsh language, cultural tourism and education and learning. We will aim to establish productive relationships with the business sector, advising on the preservation of their records and encouraging interest in the value of information for future economic growth.

This is particularly evident in the need for a coherent digital infrastructure across Welsh libraries and archives. The recent joint procurement of a new library management system in partnership with WHELF (Wales Higher Education Libraries Forum) demonstrates the benefit of working together. The Library's partnerships are varied



We aim to be at the centre of Welsh national cultural life, ensuring that Wales benefits from the investment in the Library's activities and services. Working with a broad range of partners, we will provide support for local and national initiatives, actively improving life chances and realising personal potential through our work.

and numerous and extend from working with the other five UK Legal Deposit Libraries, Archives and Records Council Wales (ARCW) and Wales Higher Education Libraries Forum (WHELF).

We are committed to working with communities where access to the benefits of cultural activities are limited. Our active support for the Fusion: Creating Opportunities through Culture Programme to use cultural activities to inspire ambition and aspiration in deprived communities will continue as will our partnership with schools to encourage engagement and interest through stimulating educational activities using our collections. We will participate in the programme led by Creative & Cultural Skills and the Welsh Government to support young people to gain workplace skills in the heritage sector through the Heritage Lottery Fund's Skills for the Future grant, if funding is secured.

The recent co-location of the Royal Commission for the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) at the National Library has already provided opportunities for joint activities, building on existing collaboration with the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies (CAWCS). The strategic partnership between ourselves, RCAHMW, Cadw, Amgueddfa Cymru-Museum Wales and Trade Unions which will develop Historic Wales will provide new approaches to improve commercial functions, share skills and jointly promote heritage and culture. It will build on the success of our partnership with RCAHMW and Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales to deliver the People's Collection Wales, supporting individuals and communities to collect, record and share their own histories.

These partnerships also provide opportunities to locate our services beyond Aberystwyth and stimulate usage and interest from new audiences, such as our first ever site in Cardiff at the University Library and a new partnership with Pembrokeshire County Council to develop a new County Library, Gallery and information centre in Haverfordwest.

We will:

- Work with other organisations to develop new opportunities such as seeking to support business records and developing the National Music Archive.
- Provide leadership in the establishment of a coherent digital infrastructure strategy for the library and archive sector in Wales.
- Promote the Library's collections and services in both Welsh and English to wider audiences, including those supported by the Fusion: Creating Opportunities through Culture Programme.
- Develop the Library's physical presence in other parts of Wales as a mid-term strategy.
- Work with the RCAHMW, Cadw, Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales and Trade Unions to improve commercial services, skills development and promotional activities as part of the Heritage Wales strategic partnership.

# Ensuring Resilience for the Long-Term

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The Library must ensure the safety and security of the national collections for the long-term. At a time of uncertainty for public finances, we need to be confident that our financial planning enables us to carry out our core function whilst seeking to obtain funding to innovate and develop new activities and services.

Over the last hundred years, in addition to government funding, we have been fortunate to receive generous donations from individuals, the Friends of NLW, trusts, and fund-giving bodies to support our work for Wales. Over the next 4 years, we will re-invigorate our approach to attract funding from donors, commercial income and grants. A revitalised patrons' scheme will form part of the income-generation plan, alongside targeted applications to the National Lottery, charitable foundations, research bodies and government departments. Commercial income will also need to be raised from activities and services in Aberystwyth and other sites, as well as licensing content for commercial use. We will aim to raise £1million each year by 2021 to support the development of innovative services, acquisitions, collections care, staff expertise and improved access to the national collections.

We will also seek to interest potential donors through the better promotion of our work and our custodianship of our collections. We acknowledge that these relationships develop over a period of time however we will be consistent in our investment of time and resources to implement a strong income-generation strategy.





At a time of uncertainty for public finances, we will aim to ensure resilience for our finances and assets through financial planning for the long-term.

Our staff represent a vital asset in our ability to fulfil our core remit and over the last 5 years staffing levels have fallen 30% due to reduced funding levels from government. This is a challenging position as a great deal of expertise and experience has been lost as individual members of staff retire. Working with our Partnership Council, we will implement a Workforce Development Plan to address skills shortages, succession planning and organisational staff structures. It will be essential to attract new income streams to fund posts which enable us to innovate and develop new services and activities.

Long-term resilience requires a robust approach to secure our physical estate and assets. We will complete a major capital programme to address immediate building issues, funded by the Welsh Government, and implement an Asset Management Plan to identify how we will manage assets for the mid and long-term.

We will:

- Implement a long-term income-generation strategy increasing commercial income, grants and donations to raise £1 million annually by 2021.
- Implement a Workforce Development Plan to retain expertise, improve succession planning and develop new skills needed to deliver our strategic priorities and specific projects.
- Complete a major capital improvement programme to address significant building issues, increase and improve storage capacity for collections and improve the visitor experience, leading to a long-term Asset Management Plan.





# Our Targets

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By 2021, we will aim to,

- Maintain our existing core services and delivery as a national Legal Deposit Library based on a stable baseline in our grant from the Welsh Government over the 4 years
- Continue to promote and encourage the use of Welsh in all our internal and external activities, and comply with our statutory to deliver the Welsh language standards agreed with the Welsh Language Commissioner
- Establish a Strategic Partnership with Cadw, AC-NMW, RCAHMW and Trades Unions to develop Historic Wales by July 2017
- Implement an initial strategy to deliver the statutory requirements of the Future Generations (Wales) Act by December 2017
- Complete a Skills Audit and Development Programme, and implement a People Strategy and Workforce Development Plan by 2018
- Complete a scoping report on the establishment of a National Archive for Wales by March 2019
- Implement a National Digital Preservation Strategy in a leadership role for Wales by 2019
- Continue to contribute digital educational resources for Y Hwb; deliver the People's Collection Wales in partnership, and support the delivery of the Cymru'n Cofio Wales Remembers 1914-1918 Commemoration Programme, increasing our output by 10% by 2019
- Enhance the technical infrastructure and content of the Dictionary of Welsh Biography, working in partnership with the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, by 2019
- Complete a major capital programme and develop a new Asset Management Plan by 2020
- Continue to extend our marketing and user engagement strategies, supporting the Year of Legends in 2017 and the Year of the Sea in 2018. increasing the number of people visiting the Library and engaging in activities by 15% by 2021
- Increase commercial income, grants and donations to raise £1 million annually by 2021
- Double our digital usage to 3 million visits by 2021
- Double the number of digital items to 10 million by 2021
- Increase our outreach and engagement work for the Fusion Programme by 20% by 2021
- Develop a strategic relationship with BBC Cymru Wales, S4C and ITV Wales to preserve and provide access to broadcast material by 2021
- Maintain our Customer Service Excellence Standard accreditation and our Visit Wales Gold standard until 2021
- Continue to work with Wikimedia UK to develop and embed digital engagement with our open content on Wikipedia and other third-party platforms to increase views of the Library's content to 250 million by 2021 and actively contribute to the development of Welsh language content on Wicipedia