



Ashok Ahir & Pedr ap Llwyd  
Llywydd a Phrif Weithredwr Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru  
Ffordd Penglais  
Aberystwyth  
SY23 3BU

September 2023

Annwyl Ashok a Pedr,

As you know, I met with the Library's Trade Union representatives on 14 February. During the meeting, they shared their concerns and raised issues regarding the Board's recommendation to explore changing staff pension arrangements and the manner in which this decision was taken.

My officials have since raised these issues with you and I'd like to thank you for the information that you provided which enabled me to respond to the Trade Union representatives on 22 March to clarify the Library's position. You were copied into my response.

The expectation of openness is clear in your Framework Agreement document. Where practicable and appropriate, you are expected to hold your meetings in public. I understand that all staff members, including union representatives, with the exception of executive team members, the Clerk and Head of HR, have been asked not to attend both closed and open sessions of the Board. You have suggested that this enables Trustees to engage in full, open and honest discussion about all matters. However, open sessions, remain open to the public and anyone can attend. If staff choose to attend these meetings, they do so in their own time.

I understand, as required by your regulations, that:

***Items of business to be taken in private at a Trustees' meeting shall be noted on the agenda with the reason for the business being taken in closed session, which shall also be recorded in the published minutes of the meeting, unless the President rules that it is inappropriate to specify a reason due to the nature of the business***

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

***to be transacted.** Such reasons may include, by way of example only, the disclosure of personal information, commercial confidentiality or matters covered by legal privilege.*

I would expect the use of the power to close meetings to be exceptional rather than regular, that the reason for this decision normally be published and an explanation is provided to Ministers disclosing the reason for a closed discussion in circumstances where it is determined that the nature of the business would deem it inappropriate for reasons to be published.

The minutes from an extraordinary meeting held on 23 February still do not appear to be published on your website. I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that regulation 10.2 states that confirmed minutes will be placed on the website but, this does not appear to be happening.

We are facing challenging times and I am extremely committed to partnership working and collaboration to find ways forward. This has been confirmed in the Social Partnership and Public Procurement Bill that is currently before the Senedd. In this spirit, I encourage you to look for every opportunity to engage with your Trade Union partners to ensure that their members' voices are given full consideration during your decision-making processes.

I was also disappointed to learn that in recent Board meetings both members of the Executive and Trustees have been critical of Welsh Government and the relationships with officials. This is not my understanding from our recent conversations or the feedback from officials. If there are areas of concern, I would appreciate that these are raised directly with my officials in the first instance.

Yours sincerely,

**Dawn Bowden AS/MS**

Dirprwy Weinidog y Celfyddydau, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth  
Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism