



HALF-YEARLY MEETING

VENUE: Castell Brychan, Aberystwyth
DATE: 29 June 2012
PRESENT: Professor M. Wynn Thomas (Chair)

Local Authorities

Councillor Myfanwy Alexander (Powys)
Councillor B. Towyn Evans (Ceredigion)
Councillor David Rees (Pembrokeshire)
Councillor Fiona M. Gordon (Swansea)
Councillor Huw R. Davies (Caerphilly)
Councillor Giles Howard (Monmouth)
Councillor Graham Davies (Merthyr Tydfil)

County Librarians

Mr Wil T. Phillips

National Library of Wales

Mr R. Arwel Jones

CILIP Cymru/Wales

Mrs Carol M. Edwards

Friends of the Books Council

Mr Tegwyn Jones

The Council's Panels

Mr David Barker

Vice-Chair

Mr Gareth Davies Jones

Honorary Secretary

Mr D. Geraint Lewis

Co-opted Members

Mr W. Gwyn Williams
Mrs Rona Aldrich

Staff

Mr Elwyn Jones (Chief Executive)
Mr Arwyn Roderick (Director of Finance and Business)
Mrs Moelwen Gwyndaf (Director of Administration and Services)
Mr Neville Evans (Distribution Centre Manager)
Mr Phil Davies (Director of Information and Promotion)
Mr Richard Owen (Head of the Grants Department)
Mr Sion Ilar (Head of the Design Department)
Mrs Delyth Humphreys (Head of the Children's Books and
Reading Promotion Department)
Mr Tom Ferris (Sales and Marketing Manager)

Dr Lucy Thomas
 Mrs Delyth G. Morgans Phillips
 Mrs Emma Davies
 Ms Anwen Pierce
 Mr Owain Thomas

APOLOGIES: Councillors Eurfryn Davies; Wyn Ellis Jones; Alun Lenny; Chris Bithell; David Wilkshire; Stuart Egan; Messrs. Gwyn Jones; Alun P. Thomas; Gwydion Hughes; T. Hywel James; Ioan Kidd; Dafydd John Pritchard; Clive Phillips; Dr Hywel Owen; Ms Marian Delyth; Ms Mererid Morgan; Mrs Marian Beech Hughes (Head of the Editorial Department)

1 CHAIR'S BUSINESS

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. He extended a special welcome to Councillors Huw R. Davies (Caerphilly); Fiona Gordon (Swansea); Graham Davies (Merthyr Tydfil) and Myfanwy Alexander (Powys); Mr Wil T. Phillips (Chief Librarian of Carmarthenshire) and Mr Owain Thomas (Information Technology Officer), all of whom were attending their first meeting of the Council.
- 1.2 Condolences were extended to Mr Elwyn Jones who had lost his mother and an aunt in January; to Mr Neville Evans who had lost his father in March, and to Mr T. Hywel James who had also recently lost his father; sympathy was also extended to the family of the late Councillor Arwel Gwynn Jones (who represented Wrexham on the Executive Committee and the Council) who had died in April.
- 1.3 The following were congratulated:
 - Mr D. Geraint Lewis on the publication of his latest book, *Ar Flaen fy Nhafod – Casgliad o Ymadroddion Cymraeg*.
 - Mr Gareth Davies Jones on being honoured by the Gorsedd of Bards;
 - Mrs Delyth Morgans Phillips (Information Officer) on her recent marriage.
- 1.5 Best wishes were extended to Ifana Savill (Officer at the Grants Department) who had recently had a hip replacement operation, and to Glenys Jenkins (the Distribution Centre) who had also recently undergone surgery.
- 1.6 Thanks were paid to Mr Roger Davies, widower of the late Mrs Catrin Puw Davies, for sponsorship of £500 towards the World Book Day annual lecture, which was delivered at the Pierhead Building, Cardiff Bay, at the beginning of March this year.
- 1.7 Good wishes were conveyed to Delyth Humphreys (Head of the Children's Books and Reading Promotion Department) on her retirement at the end of September.

2 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual Meeting, held on 1 December 2011, were confirmed.

3 MATTERS ARISING

- 3.1 Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Books Council
 The Chief Executive noted that several events had been held under the banner of the Council's 50th anniversary. He referred specifically to a successful event held at the Hay Festival, where Professor M. Wynn Thomas was in conversation with the author Fflur Dafydd, and to a reunion of current and past members of the Council staff. He further noted that a meeting will be held at the National Library in October, in the

company of author Eigra Lewis Roberts, and in December a reception will be held at the Senedd building in Cardiff.

3.2 Friends of the Books Council

Mr Tegwyn Jones, Chair of the Friends of the Books Council, reported that the new Steering Committee had met in February, with Mr Ian Lloyd Hughes acting as Secretary for the next two years. Mr Ifor Glyn Efans had also agreed to serve as Membership Secretary.

Bethan Gwanas was in the process of creating a bilingual page on Facebook in order to try and increase the membership, which is still hovering under the 400 mark, and members of the Friends' Steering Committee have pledged to do their best to attract at least 6 new members each.

It was also noted that it was the Committee's intention to take a fresh look at the format of *The Friend / Y Cyfaill* in order, amongst other considerations, to make it more appealing to younger readers.

For some time, the Friends have been responsible for sponsoring the Mary Vaughan Jones Award which is presented once every three years to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the field of children's books in Wales over many years. This year's recipient was the illustrator and author Jac Jones, and the Award was presented to him by the Chief Executive in an event held at the beginning of June in Oriel Ynys Môn, Llangefni.

It was noted that the Friends' Annual Meeting will be held this year on 26 October at the National Library, when Professor Wynn Thomas will be in conversation with the writer and poet Eigra Lewis Roberts. This meeting will be held as part of the Council's 50th anniversary celebrations. The Chair thanked the National Library for their cooperation; this will be a multi-media presentation, with an opportunity to view film clips in addition to listening to the author.

3.3 Review of English-language Magazines

The Chair presented the decisions of the Publishing Grants Panel (English-language) regarding revenue magazines. The Panel had decided to hold an independent review of English-language magazines from Wales, offering support to the revenue magazines for a period of two years during the period of the review. It will be undertaken by an independent panel chaired by Dr Tony Bianchi. In the near future, a company will be appointed to conduct market research amongst readers, which will form part of the review.

4 GRANTS AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

4.1 Grants 2012/13

The Director of Finance and Business presented a paper noting the grants received for 2012/13.

4.2 Financial Position 2013/14–2014/15

The Director of Finance and Business referred to the proposed changes to the core funding during the forthcoming year.

5 PRESENTATIONS

5.1 E-publishing

Phil Davies explained in detail how the Council had devised a scheme to fulfil the demand for e-books, with the intention of helping publishers in Wales to convert as

many titles as possible into e-books and to create a platform on Gwales to enable the titles to be offered for sale to the public.

The Council's decision to use Gardners, the books wholesaler, as a source for e-books was explained. Phil Davies listed the advantages of this method, including the ability to offer a format supported by most of the various devices and software available on the market; shops which have their own websites will also be able to obtain e-books from the same source.

At the same time, improvements were made to the payment methods which will benefit all Gwales customers, not only those buying e-books (e.g. the ability to use PayPal, and to authorise a payment immediately without human intervention). Funding of £36,000 was received from the Heritage Department towards this work.

In conjunction with this work, the Language Technologies Unit, Canolfan Bedwyr, Bangor University, was commissioned to prepare a background report for the Council on the field of e-books, together with a technical guidelines document for use by publishers. Copies of the guidelines were sent to the publishers in March.

In order to boost the number of Welsh-language e-books, and to help publishers pay for staff time as they prepare and amend e-books, the Grants Department has offered them sponsorship of £100 per title, with £3,000 of last year's budget and £7,000 of this year's budget being set aside for the purpose. The scheme's emphasis will be on novels for readers aged 9 and upwards, novels for young people and adults, together with autobiographies/biographies for adults. To date, there are some 195 e-books on the Gwales website, with 24 of them being Welsh-language titles.

In the field of books for young children, Gwasg y Dref Wen has already placed audio files of storybooks on the internet, with the support of the Grants Department, and another publisher, Rily, has created an app for iPads based on a dictionary for children.

Phil Davies noted that digitizing, and ensuring that the Welsh language is able to benefit from the new technology, is a priority in the Welsh Government's Language Strategy announced by Leighton Andrews, the Minister for Education. The Council is a member of the Welsh Language, Technology and Digital Media Group which is chaired by the Minister.

5.2 Reading Promotion Schemes

Delyth Humphreys, Head of the Children's Books and Reading Promotion Department, described the extensive work conducted in relation to the reading promotion schemes funded by the Welsh Government's Department of Education and Skills.

This year's World Book Day Lecture was delivered by Ann Keane, and chaired by Leighton Andrews, the Minister for Education and Skills. It was noted that the 2013 lecture will be delivered by the journalist Trevor Fishlock.

Details were given of the Quick Reads/Stori Sydyn scheme, referring particularly to the decision to arrange launch events in Wales on St Dwynwen's Day, to correspond with the theme, *Falling in Love with Reading*.

The outstanding success of the Reading Communities schemes was outlined, explaining that the Council had been specially invited to give a presentation at the LitCam conference, part of the Frankfurt Book Festival, in the autumn.

Thanks were conveyed to Delyth for her sterling work in leading the department, and members wished her well on her forthcoming retirement.

The Chairman thanked Phil and Delyth for their presentations.