

WELSH BOOKS COUNCIL

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

VENUE: Council Chamber, Carmarthen

DATE: 24 November 2004

PRESENT: Mr D. Geraint Lewis (Chairman)

Local Authorities

Councillor John Meirion Davies (Anglesey)

Councillor Mrs D.M.J. James (Powys)

Councillor Canon Steve S. Morgan (Merthyr Tydfil)

Councillor B. Towyn Evans (Ceredigion)

Councillor Cheryl Philpott (Swansea)

Councillor John M. Griffiths (Pembrokeshire)

Councillor A. D. Hampton (Vale of Glamorgan)

National Assembly for Wales

Mr P. Mark Williams

Chief Librarians

Mrs Rona Aldrich

CILIP

Mr Rhys Bebb Jones

Estyn

Mrs Ann Keane

Council Panels

Mr Richard Houdmont (Chairman of the Publishing Grants Panel)

Mr Gareth Davies Jones (Chairman of the Grants Panel (Welsh-language))

Mr Gareth William Jones (Chairman of the Children's Books Panel)

Honorary Treasurer

Mr W. Gwyn Jones

Co-opted Members

Dr Brynley F. Roberts

Staff

Miss Gwerfyl Pierce Jones (Director)

Mr Elwyn Jones (Head of Administration and Public Relations)

Mr Elgan Davies (Head of the Design Department)

Mr Dewi Morris Jones (Head of the Editorial Department)

Mr D. Philip Davies (Head of the Marketing Department)

Miss Menna Lloyd Williams (Head of the Children's Books Department)

Mr Arwyn Roderick (Head of Finance, Business and Information Technology)

Mr Dafydd Charles Jones (Distribution Centre Manager)

Officers:

Dr Kirsti Bohata

Mrs Delyth Humphreys
 Mrs Lila Piette
 Mr Arwel Glyn Roberts

Also present:
 Mr Geraint Davies

APOLOGIES: Dr Lionel Madden; Professor M. Wynn Thomas; Councillor Morfudd M. Jones; Mrs Lynda Williams; Messrs R. Arwel Pierce; Alan W. Breeze; Christopher Bithell; Messrs Alun Creunant Davies; Iolo M.LI. Walters; John Valentine Williams; Alun P. Thomas; William H. Howells; Milwyn Jarman; W. Gwyn Williams; Geraint Rees Thomas; Geraint H. James; Dr Rhidian Griffiths; Dr Huw M. Edwards; Mrs Sue Johnson; Mrs Catrin Puw Davies.

1 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

- 1.1 Mr D. Geraint Lewis welcomed members to the meeting and explained that he was Chairing in place of Dr J. Lionel Madden, who was unwell. It was noted that the members sent him their best wishes for a speedy recovery.
- 1.2 A number of apologies were noted including Mr Milwyn Jarman, QC, the Council's Honorary Counsel. The Council extended their sympathies to him on the death of his brother recently.
- 1.3 A special welcome was extended to members attending their first meeting – Mr Mark Williams (National Assembly for Wales), Mrs Ann Keane (Estyn), Councillor B. Towyn Evans (Ceredigion); John M. Griffiths (Pembrokeshire); Cheryl Philpott (Swansea) and Canon Steve S. Morgan (Merthyr Tydfil).
- 1.4 Mr Arwel Glyn Roberts, a member of the Grants Department staff, was also welcomed to his first meeting.
- 1.5 The chairman referred with sadness to the premature death of Mr Geoffrey Morgan, a member of Council staff. He had worked for the Council for a short period visiting bookshops. Sympathy was extended to the family in their bereavement.
- 1.6 Dr Huw Meirion Edwards, a member of the Council, was congratulated on winning the Chair at the Newport National Eisteddfod and Dr Jason Walford Davies, a member of the Publishing Grants Panel (Welsh-language), on winning the Crown.
- 1.7 Professor M. Wynn Thomas was congratulated on a *festskrift* recently published in his honour. Mr Gareth William Jones was congratulated on the publication of a children's novel and Dr Kirsti Bohata, a member of staff, was also congratulated on her book.
- 1.8 Mr Dewi Morris Jones, Head of the Editorial Department, was congratulated on reaching the honourable milestone of thirty years as member of the Books Council staff.

2 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Half Yearly Meeting held on 25 June 2004 were confirmed.

3 MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Assembly Policy Review: Welsh writing in English

Dr Kirsti Bohata presented a summary of the latest developments regarding the additional funding for Welsh writing in English. It was noted that an additional sum of £250,000 had been announced in May this year to be spent during the current financial year. Schemes had been set up to assist publishers to commission popular books, arrange marketing programmes and employ additional staff. Approximately half the budget had so far been allocated. In addition, publicists had been appointed to increase coverage in the press and the media and it was hoped to set up a series of awards for the industry. An advertisement inviting a tender to produce a series of classics had also appeared in the press.

3.2 Joint Marketing Strategy

A report was presented by Mr Richard Houdmont, Chairman of the Working Group responsible for preparing the document. Although the Assembly had welcomed the document, no additional resources had so far been allocated to implement the recommendations. Mr Houdmont said that he was very glad that the Books Council intended to implement some of the recommendations within its existing budget.

3.3 Culturenet Cymru: Books from the Past

Dr Kirsti Bohata explained the scheme whereby a limited number of books of cultural value which are out of print and unlikely to be reprinted are placed on the website. Dr Bohata reported that up to 10 additional titles would be added to the site over the next year, and noted that the site already contained nine titles.

3.4 Friends of the Books Council

In the absence of Mr Alun Creunant Davies and Professor M. Wynn Thomas, the Head of Administration and Public Relations reported on their behalf.

It was noted that membership of the Friends now stood at 413 and that membership forms had been distributed to every member of the Council. He also referred to an extremely successful meeting of the Friends held lately to pay tribute to Professor M. Wynn Thomas for his eminent contribution to literary studies in Wales in both Welsh and English.

He mentioned further that the Friends' latest information pack would be distributed shortly and thanked Mr Lyn Léwis Dafis especially for his work editing the newsletter, *The Friend*.

4 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Chairman referred to clause 1.3 in the last minutes outlining the procedure for appointing a Vice-Chairman. He reported that the Executive Committee had approved Professor M. Wynn Thomas's name to be presented to the Council. The Council approved the recommendation unanimously.

5 GRANTS FOR 2005/06

The Head of Finance, Business and Information Technology presented a paper outlining the likely situation regarding grants from the Assembly Government for 2005/06 noting that the extra £250,000 received this year would become part of the baseline.

6 MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND PANELS

The Head of Administration and Public Relations presented members with a full list of Council members, the Executive Committee and Panels, for information and in accordance with the Constitution.

7 REPORTS ON DEPARTMENTAL ACTIVITIES

7.1 The Marketing Department

The Head of the Marketing Department referred to a number of marketing schemes arranged to promote Christmas books. As a result of discussions between the Council and Cwlwm y Cyhoeddwyr (the association of Welsh-language publishers), it was agreed to start broadcasting the television adverts at the beginning of November this year, a month earlier than last year. This year it was decided to prepare an advertisement made up of short scenes and four advertisements were created featuring Welsh-language and English-language books. He also referred to the annual supplements, namely *Gwledd y Nadolig* and *Books from Wales*. *Gwledd y Nadolig* was distributed through the local *papurau bro* and *Books from Wales* with the *Western Mail*.

It was also noted that the Council was arranging a Reading Groups scheme jointly with Estyn Allan and that arrangements were in hand to prepare suitable material for use by individual groups. Finally, he referred to the recent improvements to the *gwales.com* website, which had led to increased use of the site by the public.

7.2 Children's Books Department

The Head of the Children's Books Department presented a report on the Department's work referring to the bilingual book *Dewch i Ddarllen Gyda'ch Plentyn/Come and Read with Your Child* which was published jointly with the organisation Twf, the project to encourage parents to bring up their children bilingually. It was noted that the booklet had already been widely distributed through Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin, the PPA and the schools.

It was reported that the Schools Officers were still working diligently visiting schools, but that it was becoming increasingly difficult to secure orders due to the increased pressure on school budgets.

It was also noted that 44 schools had taken part in the *Llyfrau sy'n Taro 10* initiative which targets secondary school pupils. Arad Goch Theatre Company arranged a tour of schools again this year presenting a selection of the books. A concerted effort was being made to ensure that the book clubs reached their targets for this year.

8 PRESENTING THE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2002/03

Mr W. Gwyn Jones, Treasurer, presented his report on the accounts, referring to the increase in the grant from the National Assembly. He noted that the Annual Report contained a summary of accounts only adding that a copy of the full accounts had been

produced separately and was included in the papers. He said that the full accounts could also be viewed on the Council's website.

He thanked the Head of Finance, Business and Information Technology for preparing the figures and Mr Llŷr James for auditing the accounts.

9 PROBABLE FINANCIAL SITUATION 2004/05 AND ESTIMATES 2005/06

The reports were presented by the Treasurer and were approved.

10 PRESENTING THE ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2003/04

The Director presented the Report on the year's work highlighting the fact that the Council is now the body formally responsible for developing the publishing industry in Wales, in both Welsh and English. She reported that the main development during the year had been extending the responsibility for the distribution of grants to include English-language books and magazines and the Culture Committee's Policy Review of Welsh writing in English. She emphasised the importance of the report resulting from the Review and added that the support of Alun Pugh, Minister for Culture, the Welsh Language and Sports, for the recommendations was very greatly welcomed. The additional funding received during the year had enabled work to start on developing this important area.

She also referred to the developments in the field of publishing in the Welsh language which had seen substantial progress during the past years.

She thanked all the Council members for their support and especially the Chairman and the Chief Officers.

In conclusion, she said that all these developments had put additional pressure on Council staff and she thanked them also for their support and for sharing the vision of developing the publishing industry in Wales.

The Director and her staff were thanked by Mr Gareth William Jones who congratulated them on rising to the challenge and working tirelessly for the benefit of the publishing industry.