

WELSH BOOKS COUNCIL

HALF-YEARLY MEETING

VENUE: Castell Brychan, Aberystwyth

DATE: 27 June 2008

PRESENT: Professor M. Wynn Thomas (Chair)

Local Authorities

Councillor Morfudd M. Jones (Denbighshire)

Councillor Jim Criddle (Caerphilly)

Councillor Gwilym Fychan (Powys)

Councillor David Rees (Pembrokeshire)

Councillor Lynda G. Williams (Neath Port Talbot)

Chief Librarians

Mr Lawrence Rawsthorne

Mrs Siân E. Jones

Ms Gill John

Mr Dewi Thomas

Mr Lloyd Ellis

National Library of Wales

Dr Rhidian Griffiths

WJEC

Mr Alun Treharne

CILIP Cymru/Wales

Mr Rhys Bebb Jones

The Welsh Academy

Mr R. Arwel Jones

Friends of the Books Council

Mr Tegwyn Jones

Dr Brynley F. Roberts

Council Panels

Mr David Barker

Vice Chair

Mr Gareth Davies Jones

Honorary Secretary

Mr D. Geraint Lewis

Honorary Treasurer

Mr W. Gwyn Jones

Co-opted Members

Mr W. Gwyn Williams

Mr Ioan Kidd

Staff

Miss Gwerfyl Pierce Jones (Director)
 Mr Elwyn Jones (Head of Administration and Public Relations)
 Mr Sion Ilar (Senior Design Officer)
 Miss Menna Lloyd Williams (Head of the Children's Books Department)
 Mr Arwyn Roderick (Head of Finance, Business & Information Technology)
 Ms Helgard Krause (Head of Sales and Marketing)
 Mr Richard Owen (Senior Grants Officer)
 Mrs Marian B. Hughes (Senior Editorial Officer)
 Mr Dyfed Evans
 Mrs Delyth Humphreys
 Ms Lila Piette
 Mrs Karina Wyn Dafis
 Ms Tanwen Haf

APOLOGIES: Councillors Eurfryn Davies; Keith Morgan; Arwel Gwynn Jones;
 B. Towyn Evans; Mrs Margaret E. Davies; Liz Hacket Pain; Eirwyn Williams;
 Messrs. Alun P. Thomas; Robat Arwyn Jones; T. Hywel James;
 Ms Tudfil Adams; Mrs Ann Keane; Mr Dafydd Charles Jones; Mr Phil Davies.

1 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. He extended a special welcome to Mr Alun Treharne (WJEC) and Councillors Gwilym Fychan (Powys), David Rees (Pembrokeshire) and Jim Criddle (Caerphilly), who were attending their first Council meeting.
- 1.2 Mr David Barker, Chair of the Council's Children's Books Panel, was welcomed to the meeting following a period of ill-health.
- 1.3 Warm wishes were conveyed to Anwen Jones, Secretary in the Information Services Department.
- 1.4 Dr Rhidian Griffiths was congratulated on adopting a daughter, and best wishes were extended to him on his retirement. Mr R. Arwel Jones was congratulated on his appointment to the post of Director of Public Services at the National Library, to succeed Rhidian.
- 1.5 Mr Dewi Morris Jones, a former member of staff, was congratulated on becoming an honorary member of the Gorsedd of Bards.
- 1.6 It was noted that the towns of Barry and Llanelli had been selected to take part in the Reading Communities campaign under the auspices of the National Year of Reading. Siân Jones (Vale of Glamorgan) and Dewi Thomas (Carmarthenshire) were congratulated on their successful applications.
- 1.7 The Director was congratulated on becoming an Honorary Fellow at the University of Wales, Lampeter.

2 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual Meeting, held on 28 November 2007, were confirmed.

3 MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Grants 2008/09

It was reported that the Minister had reconsidered the operational costs of the Books Council for 2008/09 and 2009/2010; the final settlement represents an increase of 4.38% in 2008/09 and 4.19% in 2009/10.

The Chair stated that he welcomed this increase as there was considerable pressure on the Council's staff at present, not least because of the activities generated by the National Year of Reading.

3.2 The Welsh Assembly Government: Welsh Language Scheme

Elwyn Jones noted that the Welsh Language Board had held a review of the Council's Welsh Language Scheme, following its adoption over a year ago. It was reported that the Council's procedures had been approved. Elwyn Jones further reported that the Welsh Assembly Government had published a list of public bodies under the Welsh Language Act and that the Books Council was included in this list. Consequently, the implementation of the scheme is now a statutory requirement.

3.3 Support for the Welsh Press

The Director reported that the Welsh Assembly Government had announced a sum of £200,000 per annum over three years to promote the Welsh-language press and that the task of administering the money had been entrusted to the Books Council.

It was further noted that the grant had been allocated to Golwg Cyf for a period of three years.

3.4 National Year of Reading 2008

Elwyn Jones reported that the Council was coordinating the activities of the National Year of Reading on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government. Later in the day, Delyth Humphreys would be reporting on the activities.

Elwyn Jones thanked all the partners who were supporting the Year of Reading, especially the local authorities, and he also thanked the Chief Librarians for their willing support.

3.5 Friends of the Books Council

Mr Tegwyn Jones, Chair of the Friends of the Books Council, reported that the membership remains at approximately 400 and he urged everyone to take advantage of this opportunity to join the Friends. He also stated that the summer information pack was in the process of being prepared, and that the Friends' annual meeting would be held in the autumn.

4 ELECTION OF THE COUNCIL'S CHIEF OFFICERS 2008–2011

4.1 Chair

Professor M. Wynn Thomas was re-elected.

4.2 Vice Chair

Mr Gareth Davies Jones was re-elected.

4.3 Honorary Secretary

Mr Geraint Lewis was re-elected.

4.4 Honorary Treasurer
Mr W. Gwyn Jones was re-elected.

4.5 Honorary Counsel
Mr Gwydion Hughes was elected.

4.6 Honorary Solicitor
Mr Alun P. Thomas was re-elected.

5 ELECTION OF CUSTODIAN TRUSTEES 2008–2011

The four persons named below were chosen to act as Custodian Trustees for the period 2008–2011:

Professor M. Wynn Thomas
Mr Gareth Davies Jones
Mr D. Geraint Lewis
Mr W. Gwyn Jones

6 REPRESENTATIVES OF CHIEF LIBRARIANS (up to 8)

The following names were recommended to represent the Chief Librarians for the period 2008–2011:

Mr Alan Watkin	Wrexham
Mr Steve Hardman	Swansea
Ms Gillian Evans	Rhondda Cynon Taf
Ms Elspeth Morris	Cardiff
Mrs Ann Jones	Monmouthshire
Mr Neil Bennett	Pembrokeshire
Mr William Howells	Ceredigion
Mr John Woods	Bridgend

Thanks were conveyed to members who served on the Council for the period 2005–2008.

7 REPORT ON MEMBERSHIP OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

7.1 Two Chief Librarians

At the recommendation of the Chair, it was agreed to invite Mr Alan Watkin (Wrexham) and Mr Steve Hardman (Swansea) to serve on the Executive Committee.

7.2 Co-opted Members to the Council and the Executive Committee (up to 4)

It was agreed to re-elect Mr W. Gwyn Williams and Mr Ioan Kidd and also to elect one new member, namely Dr Rhidian Griffiths.

7.3 Others

In accordance with the Constitution, the Chair noted that a comprehensive list of the members of the Council, the Executive Committee and sub-committees and panels would be presented to the Annual Meeting.

8 PRESENTATIONS

8.1 The National Year of Reading

Delyth Humphreys gave a report on the activities of the National Year of Reading; she thanked the Welsh Assembly Government for inviting the Welsh Books Council to coordinate the activity in Wales.

She referred to the Year of Reading held ten years ago, and especially to the fact that it had been the spring-board for World Book Day, which has been held every year since then.

The official launch of the Year of Reading had been held outside the Senedd building in Cardiff Bay during March, in the presence of Jane Hutt, the Minister for Education; Rhodri Glyn Thomas, the Minister for Heritage, and John Griffiths, the Deputy Minister for Skills. Delyth Humphreys paid particular thanks to local authorities for their support for the launch, and stated that all 22 local authorities had now appointed a Year of Reading coordinator.

She further reported that the Books Council was leading on three specific schemes, namely Give a Book Week, to be held at the beginning of July; the 08 Clubs scheme to establish reading clubs for young people, and the Reading Communities scheme which would focus on two towns, namely Llanelli and Barry.

Delyth Humphreys thanked everyone for their support for the activities, and encouraged Council members to visit the National Year of Reading website and to support Give a Book Week at the beginning of July.

8.2 Sales and Marketing

Helgard Krause gave a report on the latest developments in the Sales and Marketing Department. She referred to the Kewley/Richardson report, and to specifically one of its main recommendations, namely the need for formal contracts between the publishers and the Council. She stated that the work of negotiating contracts had taken a great deal of time, but that all the main publishers had now signed a contract.

She said that the Kewley/Richardson Report had also led to significant changes in the Council's work patterns. One of the main advantages of the structural changes was that they enabled the marketing team to spend more time in discussions with publishers, sharing information and making strenuous efforts to discover new selling opportunities. She added that there was considerable emphasis on the daily monitoring of sales and targets, which had undoubtedly contributed to the substantial increase of 25% in sales over the past two years.

Helgard Krause congratulated the publishers on the high standard of their products and praised their ability to find good books that were popular with the public. Although she predicted a difficult period for the retail trade in general, she believed that the book trade was in a more favourable situation than many others to face the future.

The Chair thanked both Delyth and Helgard for their presentations, which represented the wide range of activities and services provided by the Council.

9 'GIVE A BOOK WEEK' CAMPAIGN

As part of the campaign, a book was presented to all members who were present, who were encouraged to support the campaign which would be held between 7–12 July 2008.