

# WELSH BOOKS COUNCIL

---

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

VENUE: Castell Brychan, Aberystwyth

DATE: 30 June 2005

PRESENT: Dr J. Lionel Madden (Chairman); Messrs W. Gwyn Jones; D. Geraint Lewis; Milwyn Jarman, QC; W. Gwyn Williams; Gareth Davies Jones; Rhys Bebb Jones; Richard Houdmont; Gareth William Jones; Mrs Rona Aldrich; Mrs Catrin Puw Davies; Dr Huw Meirion Edwards; Professor M. Wynn Thomas; Councillor John Meirion Davies; Councillor B. Towyn Evans; Councillor John M. Griffiths.

Staff: Miss Gwerfyl Pierce Jones; Messrs Elwyn Jones; Elgan Davies; Dewi Morris Jones; D. Philip Davies; Arwyn Roderick; Dafydd Charles Jones; Miss Menna Lloyd Williams; Dr Kirsti Bohata.

APOLOGIES: Messrs Alun Creunant Davies; Iolo M. Ll. Walters; John Valentine Williams; Alun P. Thomas; P. Mark Williams; Dr Rhidian Griffiths; Dr Brynley F. Roberts; Mrs Ann Keane; Mrs Mary Palmer; Councillor J. W. Turner; Councillor Jonathan Austin; Councillor Mrs Lynda G. Williams.

### **1 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

1.1 The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting and extended a special welcome to Councillor B. Towyn Evans (Ceredigion) who was attending his first meeting.

1.2 The Chairman expressed the Books Council's sincere condolences to Mr Alun Creunant Davies in his recent bereavement. Mr Davies had himself undergone surgery recently and the Chairman wished him well on behalf of all members.

The Council also wished to express condolences to Dr Rhidian Griffiths on his sad loss.

1.3 The Chairman noted that he was extremely pleased to see the Honorary Counsel at the meeting. He thanked Mr Milwyn Jarman for his generous advice on several occasions during the year.

### **2 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 November 2004 were confirmed.

### **3 MATTERS ARISING**

#### **3.1 Chairman's retirement**

The Chairman reported that this would be his last meeting as he was retiring as Chairman of the Council. He stated that he had written to inform members of his decision and had referred in his letter to the process of appointing a successor. This matter would be discussed under a later item, arising from the minutes of the relevant Panel.

Professor M. Wynn Thomas, the Council's Vice-Chairman, thanked Dr Madden for his exceptional contribution to the Books Council over a number of years, particularly in his role as Chairman. There would be an opportunity to express a formal vote of thanks in the afternoon meeting of the Council.

### 3.2 The Charity Commission

The Head of Administration noted that officials from the Charity Commission would be meeting representatives of the Books Council in September, as part of a programme of visits to charitable organisations.

He further noted that the handbook on the responsibilities and obligations of Trustees was currently being updated by the Commission and that a copy of the latest version would be sent to members as soon as it was available.

### 3.3 Amendments to the Constitution

The Head of Administration referred to a paper which had been circulated in advance, regarding an amendment to the Constitution.

It was agreed to propose the following amendment to the afternoon meeting of the Council.

Membership [Section IV (i) (d)]

Delete

Career Development Group, Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals Wales

## 4 **GRANTS 2005/06**

The Director presented a paper outlining the situation regarding grants for 2005/06.

She explained that the budget for 2005/06 was a standstill budget but that the £250,000 awarded in the previous year in the context of the Culture Committee's report on Welsh writing in English had been incorporated into the baseline. This was welcomed.

The Director noted that the additional responsibilities had resource implications (both human and financial) and that an increase of 5.72% in running costs would be required in 2006/07, merely in order to meet increases in salaries and pension contributions (which had risen from 7.2% to 9.7% in 2006/07 and would rise to 12.2% in 2007/08).

She noted further that the Joint Marketing Strategy remained the priority as regards funding and that Assembly Government officials were aware of the importance of this document. The Council's running costs had been discussed in the last business meeting with the Assembly Government.

The Chairman added that both he and the Director had raised these issues directly with the Minister for Culture in a meeting at the Assembly on 6 June. He said that the Minister had recognised the important work that was being undertaken to develop the industry and had accepted that more investment would lead to further progress.

## 5 **OPERATIONAL PLAN 2005/06**

The Director introduced the Plan and referred to the main developments and areas requiring attention during the year.

She noted that a few amendments/additions had been made at the request of Assembly Government officials and that the document met with their requirements.

The Director said that she was awaiting instructions regarding the Corporate Plan but was hopeful that an update would not be required this year as the current plan was for three years (2005/06–2007/08).

The Plan was approved.

## **6 PURCHASING IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

The Director referred to the minutes of the Chief Officers' Panel, 23 June, item 6, which contained a detailed report on the reports commissioned from Professor Hywel Roberts. The reports were available in draft form and a copy of the final versions would be placed on the Web. Hard copies would also be available as necessary.

It was reported that CyMAL (the Assembly Government Department responsible for Museums, Archives and Libraries) was prepared to fund one of the main recommendations of the reports, i.e. to create a module of *gwales* specifically for libraries and a working group had been set up under the chairmanship of Professor Hywel Roberts to write the specification and oversee the project.

It was noted a formal offer of £80,000 had been received from CyMAL.

Rona Aldrich warmly welcomed this development on behalf of the library sector and her comments were echoed by Geraint Lewis and Gwyn Williams.

Members approved the recommendation of the Council's Chief Officers' Panel that the work should be undertaken by Ateb Ltd for the reasons noted, that the project was an extension of the work recently undertaken in connection with *gwales* and the detailed knowledge of the VISTA systems was required in order to create the link with bookshops.

The work was to be completed for trial purposes by the end of March 2006.

## **7 REVIEW OF THE TRADE REPRESENTATION SERVICE**

The Director referred to the minutes of the Chief Officers' Panel, 23 June, item 5, for the latest developments.

It was noted that there had been some slippage in the timetable for legitimate reasons. It was also noted that the original timetable was insufficient to allow for a thorough consultation with a fair cross-section of industry stakeholders, and at the request of the consultants an extension had been approved to allow them to spend up to 24 days (maximum) on the project.

The importance of the report was emphasised, not only for the representation service itself but for the industry as a whole and its findings were eagerly awaited.

It was confirmed that the report would be considered initially by the Chief Officers' Panel but that it would be discussed by all relevant Panels and would also be made available to trade partners.

## 8 THE DISTRIBUTION CENTRE

The Manager of the Distribution Centre reported that sales figures for 2004/05 showed an increase of 12.28% on the previous year. The excellent outcome was attributed to two main factors: exceptional sales over the Christmas period as compared to the previous year and the additional money provided by the Welsh Assembly Government for expenditure on books by Primary Schools, as part of the *laith Pawb* strategy.

He noted that figures for the present financial year were also promising with a 6.63% increase in the first two months but added that it would be a huge challenge to match the previous year's figures for the reasons stated.

Mr Dafydd Charles Jones and his staff were thanked for their tireless efforts during the year.

## 9 PRESENTATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the following Panels were presented and approved:

- 9.1 Publishing Grants Panel (Welsh-language), 11–12 November 2004
- 9.2 Publishing Grants Panel (Welsh-language), 10–11 March 2005
- 9.3 CD-ROMs Panel, 15 April 2005
- 9.4 Publishing Grants Panel (English-language), 21 January 2005
- 9.5 Publishing Grants Panel (English-language), 21–22 March 2005
- 9.6 Steering Committee: World Book Day, 2 December 2004
- 9.7 Children's Books Panel, 9 December 2004
- 9.8 Trade Representation Scheme: Steering Committee, 10 February 2005
- 9.9 Marketing Panel, 25 May 2005
- 9.10 Chief Officers' Panel, 23 June 2005
- 9.11 Nominations Panel, 23 June 2005
- 9.12 Joint meeting of Chief Officers' Panel and Nominations Panel, 23 June 2005

Arising from the minutes under 9.12 above, members of the Executive Committee unanimously agreed to nominate Professor M. Wynn Thomas as Chairman of the Books Council to the meeting of Council in the afternoon.

Following the nomination of Professor Thomas, it was unanimously agreed to nominate Mr Gareth Davies Jones to serve as the Vice-Chairman.

## 10 RECENT APPOINTMENTS

Emyr Wyn Evans – Information Officer  
 Date appointed: 10 January 2005  
 Starting Date: 17 January 2005  
 A two-year initial appointment.

Helgard Krause – Overseas Marketing Officer  
 Date appointed: 30 November 2005  
 Starting date: 31 January 2005  
 A two-year initial appointment.

Adele Marie Evans – Sales Assistant  
 Date appointed: 10 January 2005  
 Starting date: 1 February 2005  
 Short term contract for one year.

## 11 COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

### 11.1 Co-opted Members to the Council and Executive Committee

It was agreed to propose the re-election of Mrs Catrin Puw Davies and Mr W. Gwyn Williams to serve for a further period of three years. It was also agreed to propose that one new member be co-opted, namely Mr Ioan Kidd.

### 11.2 Representatives from Libraries

The Chairman noted that Chief Librarians were represented on the Council in rotation. The following names were proposed for the period 2005–2008:

Mr Dewi Thomas	Carmarthen
Ms Ffion Lloyd	Newport
Mr Robat Arwyn Jones	Denbighshire
Miss Tudfil Adams	Powys
Mr Lloyd Ellis	Neath Port Talbot
Mrs Siân Jones	Vale of Glamorgan
Mr T. Hywel James	Gwynedd
Mr Lawrence Rawsthorne	Flintshire

On the recommendation of the Chairman, and as required by the Constitution, it was agreed to invite Mrs Siân Jones and Mr Lawrence Rawsthorne to represent the Chief Librarians on the Executive Committee.