

# WELSH BOOKS COUNCIL

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## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

VENUE: County Hall, Cardiff

DATE: 29 November 2006

PRESENT: Mr Gareth Davies Jones (Chairman); Messrs. W. Gwyn Jones; Milwyn Jarman, QC; Ioan Kidd; P. Mark Williams; Tegwyn Jones; Mrs Catrin Puw Davies; Dr Rhidian Griffiths; Dr Brynley F. Roberts; Councillor Morfudd M. Jones; Councillor Liz Hackett Pain; Councillor Neil Lewis.

Staff: Miss Gwerfyl Pierce Jones; Messrs Elwyn Jones; Sion Iar; D. Philip Davies; Arwyn Roderick; Dafydd Charles Jones; Miss Menna Lloyd Williams; Ms Helgard Krause.

APOLOGIES: Professor M. Wynn Thomas; Messrs D. Geraint Lewis; W. Gwyn Williams; Rhys Bebb Jones; Gareth William Jones; Lawrence Rawsthorne; Mrs Siân E. Jones; Dr Huw Meirion Edwards; Iolo M. Ll. Walters; Alun P. Thomas; Mrs Ann Keane; Councillor Keith Morgan; Councillor Eirwyn Williams.

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

- 1.1 Mr Gareth Davies Jones welcomed members to the meeting and explained that the Chairman, Professor M. Wynn Thomas, was representing the Books Council at a meeting of the Assembly's Culture Board but would be present at the Council meeting in the afternoon.
- 1.2 A special welcome was extended to Mr Tegwyn Jones who was present for the first time by virtue of his position as Chairman of the Friends of the Books Council.
- 1.3 Dr Brynley F. Roberts was welcomed back to the Executive Committee, following his appointment as Vice-Chairman of the Friends.
- 1.4 Mr Milwyn Jarman QC, the Books Council's Honorary Counsel, was welcomed and thanked for his advice and help during the course of the year.
- 1.5 Best wishes were extended to Heather Bastow (Secretary in the Marketing Department) following her long period of illness.

### **2 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 23 June 2006, were confirmed.

### **3 MATTERS ARISING**

#### **3.1 Charity Commission**

Following a visit by representatives of the Charities Commission, it was noted that the Books Council had responded to their recommendations and that a letter had been received, approving the steps taken. Mr Milwyn Jarman was thanked for his advice on several legal matters.

#### **3.2 Aberystwyth Centre for the Book**

It was reported that officers of the three bodies had agreed that this venture be terminated in its present form, although cooperation between the organisations would, of course, continue. Dr Brynley Roberts agreed that circumstances had changed and that other forms of collaboration were now available. The decision was confirmed.

#### **3.3 Correspondence concerning the late Alun Creunant Davies**

The Chairman reported that the family of the late Alun Creunant Davies had donated a sum of £5,000 to the Council in his memory and a further sum of £1,000 to the Friends of the Books Council. It was agreed that the Chief Officers should consider how this money would best be used for the benefit of the Council.

#### **3.4 Donation from Dr Dewi Davies**

The Director reported that Dr Dewi Davies had contributed a further £3,000 towards the Book Competitions organised by the Children's Book Department. It was noted that he had already contributed £18,000 and that the value of that investment, according to the latest accounts, had reached about £30,000. The interest was used to pay for competition prizes.

### **4 WELSH LANGUAGE BOARD: WELSH LANGUAGE SCHEME**

Elwyn Jones noted that, following a meeting with the Welsh Language Board, the Books Council had drawn up a draft Welsh Language Scheme and distributed it to members. He noted further that the Language Board had approved the draft and that a period of consultation would ensue. It was agreed that Chief Officers be empowered to ratify the final scheme, following consultation and further discussions with the Language Board. The Scheme would come into effect once it had been formally approved by the Welsh Language Board.

### **5 GRANTS 2007/08**

The Director presented a paper, indicating the likely situation regarding Welsh Assembly Government grants for 2007/08. There had been an increase of £53,000 in provision for running costs, primarily to meet the cost of salaries. There had been no increase in publishing grants, although the sum of £5,000 had been restored since last year's budget.

### **6 PROBABLE FINANCIAL SITUATION FOR 2006/07 AND ESTIMATES FOR 2007/08**

Mr Arwyn Roderick noted that papers had been distributed to members in advance and that Mr Gwyn Jones, the Council's Honorary Treasurer, would present them at the meeting of the Council in the afternoon.

## 7 SALES AND MARKETING

### 7.1 Kewley and Richardson Report

The Director reported that implementation of the recommendations in the Kewley/Richardson report remained a major priority. It was noted that the task of negotiating contracts with publishers was taking rather more time than expected because of the need to hold discussions with publishers as a group as well as individual companies. For this reason, it was agreed that 31 March 2007 would be a reasonable deadline for the main publishers to sign their contracts.

### 7.2 Distribution Centre

Mr Dafydd Charles Jones, Manager of the Distribution Centre, was pleased to report that October had been extremely busy at the Centre, achieving an increase of 18% over the previous year. With one day of November remaining, he was confident that last year's figures would be exceeded once more.

He noted that colourful supplements and striking advertisements helped build the demand for books and that the sales team, under the leadership of Helgard Krause, were working hard to increase sales through the bookshops.

It was also noted that Peter Morgan had been appointed Floor Manager at the Distribution Centre, and that this had been an opportunity to set benchmarks to measure the Centre's service to its customers. 98% of orders received during October had been supplied on the same day.

## 8 INFORMATION SERVICES

Mr Phil Davies explained that a new information unit had been created as part of the recent changes, with a view to improving and broadening the information available on the Council's databases.

He noted that a number of the publishers now supplied the Council with information in electronic form, including much advance information about forthcoming titles.

He also noted that *gwales/libraries*, a special module aimed at librarians, had been warmly welcomed; he added that he had visited a number of libraries recently to present the website.

Since the previous period, the Welsh Book Trade Info website had gone live, offering useful information to all sectors of the industry. He thanked Dr Tony Bianchi for his willing assistance in preparing the text.

He also explained that the book trade would introduce the 13 digit ISBN numbers next year and that the Council had all necessary arrangements in place.

Discussion followed concerning opportunities for booksellers to make use of local authors to boost sales. Expanding the Council's databases would help in this regard and adoption of the critical paths recommended in the Kewley/Richardson report would ensure that publishers supplied information to the trade promptly and according to an agreed timetable.

## 9 PRESENTATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the following Panels were presented and approved:

- 9.1 Publishing Grants Panel (Welsh-language), 28–29 June 2006

- 9.2 Publishing Grants Panel (Welsh-language), 9–10 November 2006
- 9.3 Publishing Grants Panel (English-language), 7–8 September 2006
- 9.4 CD-ROMs Panel, 10 July 2006
- 9.5 Children's Books Panel, 15 June 2006
- 9.6 Marketing Panel, 19 September 2006
- 9.7 Steering Committee: World Book Day, 26 July 2006
- 9.8 Nominations Panel, 21 November 2006

## **10 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS**

Elwyn Jones presented a list of the Council's committee and panel members for the coming year and explained that the local authorities were represented in rotation on the Executive Committee. Members of Group C were therefore approaching the end of their term of service and they were thanked for their support.

It was noted that the Panel membership list had been updated, following the meeting of the Nominations Panel the previous week.

The list was approved for presentation to the Council in the afternoon.

## **11 RECENT APPOINTMENTS**

The following list of appointments, made since the last meeting, was presented and confirmed.

Peter Morgan – Floor Manager in the Distribution Centre  
Ann-Marie Hinde – Assistant in the Distribution Centre  
Ann Davies – Receptionist at Castell Brychan

## **12 CONSIDERATION OF 2005/06 ANNUAL AND FINANCIAL REPORTS**

It was agreed that the reports would be presented to Council at the afternoon meeting.

## **13 ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING**

Mr Elwyn Jones noted that lunch was to be provided for members by kind invitation of the Right Honourable Lord Mayor of Cardiff, Councillor Gareth Neale.