



HALF YEARLY MEETING

VENUE: Castell Brychan, Aberystwyth

DATE: 1 July 2011

PRESENT: Professor M. Wynn Thomas (Chair)

Local Authorities

Councillor Eurfryn Davies (Isle of Anglesey)
Councillor Alwyn Gruffudd (Gwynedd)
Councillor Wyn Ellis Jones (Conwy)
Councillor Gwilym Fychan (Powys)
Councillor B. Towyn Evans (Ceredigion)
Councillor David Rees (Pembrokeshire)
Councillor Paul Williams (Torfaen)
Councillor Jim B. Criddle (Caerphilly)

Chief Librarians

Mrs Anita Thomas

National Library of Wales

Mr R. Arwel Jones

Welsh Government

Dr Hywel Owen

ESTYN

Mr Clive Phillips

CBAC

Mr Alun Treharne

CILIP Cymru/Wales

Mrs Carol M. Edwards

Literature Wales

Mr Dafydd J. Pritchard

Friends of the Books Council

Dr Brynley F. Roberts

Council Panels

Mr David Barker

Vice-Chair

Mr Gareth Davies Jones

Honorary Secretary

Mr D. Geraint Lewis

Co-opted Members

Mr W. Gwyn Williams

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 (Manager of the Distribution Centre)
 Mr Phil Davies (Director of Information and Promotion)
 Mr Richard Owen (Head of Grants Department)
 Mr Sion Ilar (Head of Design Department)
 Mrs Marian Beech Hughes (Head of the Editorial Department)
 Mrs Delyth Humphreys (Head of Children's Books and Reading Promotion)
 Mr Tom Ferris (Sales and Marketing Manager)
 Dr Lucy Thomas
 Miss Delyth G. Morgans
 Mrs Emma Davies
 Ms Lila Piette

APOLOGIES: Councillors Keith Morgan; Nigel Steele-Mortimer; Ron Page; Eirwyn Williams; Peter H. C. Davies; Morfudd M. Jones; Giles Howard; Messrs. W. Gwyn Jones; Alun P. Thomas; Gwydion Hughes; Tegwyn Jones; Ioan Kidd; Neil Bennett; Steve Hardman; William Howells; Mrs Ann Jones.

1 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. He extended a special welcome to Mrs Carol M. Edwards, CILIP Cymru/Wales; Mr Clive Phillips representing Mrs Ann Keane, Estyn and Mrs Anita Thomas representing Neil Bennett (Chief Librarian of Pembrokeshire), all of whom were attending their first meeting of the Council.
- 1.2 Warm wishes were conveyed to Afan ab Alun on his retirement following 42 years of service to the Council.
- 1.3 Condolences were extended to Phil Davies, Director of Information and Promotion, who had lost his mother, and to Delyth Humphreys, Head of the Children's Books and Reading Promotion Department, who had recently lost her mother-in-law.
- 1.4 Congratulations were extended to the following:
 - Mr D. Geraint Lewis on the publication of his book *Mewn Geiriau Eraill – Thesawrws i Blant* in February.
 - Councillor Arwel Gwynn Jones (Wrexham) on being honoured by the Gorsedd of Bards at the National Eisteddfod.
 - Delyth Humphreys on her promotion to Head of the Children's Books and Reading Promotion Department.
 - Ifana Savill and Richard Owen (both from the Publications Grants Department) on reaching the impressive milestone of 30 years' service on the Council's staff.

2 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual Meeting, held on 10 December 2010, were confirmed.

3 MATTERS ARISING

- 3.1 Welsh Government
 The Chief Executive explained that the Welsh Government had agreed that the Books Council would remain within the Heritage Department under the Minister for

Housing, Regeneration and Heritage. The Chair and the Chief Executive would be meeting the Minister on 4 July.

3.2 Support for the Welsh-language Press: Golwg 360

The Chief Executive noted that the recommendations of the Wavehill report were already being implemented, and that Golwg 360 was reporting back regularly to the Books Council regarding the number of visits to the website.

3.2 Additional Funds: Creative Editor Posts

The Chief Executive reported that 24 creative editors had been appointed by the publishers and that training in the form of courses and a mentoring scheme was being organised, under the leadership of Mairwen Prys Jones, with the long-term aim of raising standards and promoting book sales.

He noted the possibility of extending the training to include taster sessions for students.

3.2 Reading Promotion Schemes

The Chief Executive referred to the budget received from the Welsh Government's Education Department in respect of a number of schemes to promote reading, such as World Book Day which this year had incorporated Give a Book Week; Reading Communities, which targeted ten specific regeneration areas; Quick Reads/Stori Sydyn for reluctant readers, and the Summer Reading Challenge organised through the libraries. All these schemes complemented the Government's Literacy Plan. Funding had been secured for the first six months of the current financial year, and the Council was awaiting confirmation of funding for the next six months.

The Chief Executive referred also to the visit made by the Minister for Education and Skills to Castell Brychan.

3.3 Friends of the Books Council

Dr Brynley Roberts, Vice-Chair of the Friends, in the unavoidable absence of the Chair, Tegwyn Jones, said that the Friends' pack, including a copy of the newsletter *Y Cyfaill / The Friend*, would be distributed the following week. Membership of the Friends remains stable at around 340.

He paid thanks to Lyn Léwis Dafis for his work as Secretary and wished him well following a recent period of ill-health.

He drew attention to the Annual Meeting to be held on 15 October at the Cywain Centre, Bala, where there will be an opportunity to elect officers and to listen to the author Bethan Gwanas being interviewed by Professor M. Wynn Thomas.

3.5 Staffing Structure

The Chief Executive presented a chart showing the changes made to the staffing structure of the Council, undertaken mainly in response to observations made by the Charities Commission. The main change was to establish a Management Team of four persons (three directors and the Chief Executive) who would take responsibility for the various departments. He thanked the staff for their response to the consultation.

4 **ELECTION OF THE COUNCIL'S CHIEF OFFICERS 2011–2014**

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

5 ELECTION OF CUSTODIAN TRUSTEES 2011–2014

The four persons named below were chosen to act as Custodian Trustees for the period 2011–2014:

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 Chief Executive reported on the discussions held with the Society of Chief Librarians (SCL) when it was agreed that the society should send two representatives to the Council.

7 REPORT ON MEMEBERSHIP OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- 7.1 Two Chief Librarians
With the agreement of SCL, it was agreed to invite Mr T. Hywel James (Gwynedd) and Mr Wil T. Phillips (Carmarthen) 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 Mrs Rona Aldrich.
- 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.

4 GRANTS AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

- 4.1 Grants 2011/12
The Director of Finance and Business presented a paper outlining the grants situation for the current financial year.
- 4.2 Financial Situation 2012/13–2013/14
The Director of Finance and Business referred to the proposed cuts to the core funding over the next two years.

5 PRESENTATIONS

5.1 Grants Department

Dr Lucy Thomas, English-language Grants Officer, spoke about the *Library of Wales* series, its history and the latest developments.

Five years after its inception, the series now includes a striking and diverse list of 29 titles showcasing the breadth and variety of the field of English-language literature from Wales. The series has sold over 40,000 copies and is distributed throughout Wales and the UK, Europe and the USA. The publisher, Parthian, has been particularly successful in selling foreign rights, and the international profile of the series is growing steadily.

Lucy explained how the series is promoted within the education sector in Wales, and added that efforts to further develop this link continued to be a priority.

One of the latest exciting developments was to convert the series into e-books. The complete series is now available in a number of different formats and on various platforms. This development was made possible through a Books Council grant, and the publisher will prepare a report which will be valuable to the industry as a whole.

Three new titles will be published in the autumn, with the aim of publishing 15 further volumes during the next five years.

Richard Owen, Head of the Grants Department, spoke about the funding spent on Welsh-language books.

In presenting the statistics on the budget over the past ten years, he explained how the emphasis has changed.

Ten years ago, 78% of the grant funding was given towards production costs but currently, and following a substantial increase in the grant itself, 52.7% of the grant is allocated towards authors, visual materials and supported posts. He also explained how that money is shared between the three categories.

He referred to the types of books supported by Books Council grants which have been particularly successful.

5.2 E-books

Phil Davies, Director of Information and Promotion, presented information on the latest developments in the field of e-publishing.

He noted that the Books Council had been monitoring the situation for over a decade, ever since they commissioned the Rightsom report, *Digitisation and Electronic Publishing: developing a strategy for book publishing in Wales*, in 2001; one of the recommendations in particular – the need for a Trusted Digital Repository for Wales – remains one of the Council's aims.

He mentioned recent decisions to commission a report from Canolfan Bedwyr at Bangor University – a report which will focus on the technical aspects of creating e-books – in order to prepare a document providing 'Standards', or best practice, for use by the publishers.

In addition, the Council will move towards selling – through the Gwales website – the e-books from Wales which are already in existence, and to encourage booksellers who have their own website to do likewise. He explained that the Council has an ambitious long-term vision of creating a unit within the Council to offer an advisory service on creating e-books on behalf of publishers in Wales.

The Council would then act as an 'aggregator' and would offer an e-book service to publishers in the same way as it currently offers a design and editing service.

The Council and the National Library are jointly campaigning for resources to create a Trusted Digital Repository in the Library – a facility which would also (through the unit in the Council) offer the new service to publishers. A preliminary application has already been presented to the Welsh Government for support from their capital fund in order to finance the development.

The Chairman thanked Lucy, Richard and Phil for their presentations.