

WELSH BOOKS COUNCIL

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

VENUE: Council Chambers, Llandrindod

DATE: 2 December 2005

PRESENT: Professor M. Wynn Thomas (Chairman)

Local Authorities

Councillor John Meirion Davies (Anglesey)
Councillor Mrs D.M.J. James (Powys)
Councillor John M. Griffiths (Pembrokeshire)
Councillor J. W. Turner (Torfaen)
Councillor Morfudd M. Jones (Denbighshire)
Councillor Robert H. Poole (Newport)
Councillor Mrs Liz Hacket Pain (Monmouthshire)
Councillor Jonathan Austin (Cardiff)

National Assembly for Wales

Mr P. Mark Williams

Chief Librarians

Mrs Siân Jones
Mr Lawrence Rawsthorne
Miss Tudfil Adams
Mr Lloyd Ellis

CILIP

Mr Rhys Bebb Jones

National Library of Wales

Dr Rhidian Griffiths

Estyn

Mrs Ann Keane

Council Panels

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

Vice Chairman

Mr Gareth Davies Jones

Honorary Secretary

Mr D. Geraint Lewis

Honorary Treasurer

Mr W. Gwyn Jones

Co-opted Members

Mrs Catrin Puw Davies
Mr W. Gwyn Williams
Mr Ioan Kidd

Staff

Miss Gwerfyl Pierce Jones (Director)
 Mr Elwyn Jones (Head of Administration and Public Relations)
 Mr Arwyn Roderick (Head of Finance, Business and Information Technology)
 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)

Officers:

Dr Kirsti Bohata
 Mrs Delyth Humphreys
 Mrs Lila Piette
 Mr Arwel Glyn Roberts

APOLOGIES Councillors Mrs Lynda Williams; Margaret Davies; Messrs Keith Morgan; R. Arwel Pierce; Dilwyn O. Roberts; B. Towyn Evans; Christopher Bithell; Canon Steve S. Morgan; Messrs Iolo M.LI. Walters; John Valentine Williams; Alun P. Thomas; Milwyn Jarman, QC; Robat Arwyn Jones; Dr Huw M. Edwards; Mr Dafydd Charles Jones (Distribution Centre Manager).

1 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting and thanked Councillor Dorothy M. J. James (Powys) for her assistance with the arrangements for the Books Council to visit Llandrindod.
- 1.2 A special welcome was extended to members attending their first meeting – Messrs Lawrence Rawsthorne, Lloyd Ellis, Ioan Kidd, Mrs Siân Jones, Miss Tudfil Adams and Councillors Jonathan Austin (Cardiff); Robert H. Poole (Newport) and Mrs Liz Hacket Pain (Monmouthshire).
- 1.3 The Chairman referred to the death of Mr Alun Creunant Davies, former Director of the Welsh Books Council, who had made a substantial contribution towards the development of the book industry in Wales. A few minutes' silence was observed in his memory.
- 1.4 The Chairman referred to members of staff who had been absent from work because of illness: Mr Dafydd Charles Jones, Distribution Centre Manager, who had returned to work, but not as yet full-time; Adele Evans, Representative, who had been absent as a result of an accident and Heather Bastow, Marketing Department Secretary, who had recently undergone major surgery at Morriston Hospital.
- 1.5 A copy of the latest issue of *Welsh Book Studies*, published by the Aberystwyth Centre for the Book, was shown. Dr Rhidian Griffiths was thanked for his editorial work on the volume.
- 1.6 Two members of the Council were congratulated on their recently published titles, namely Mr D. Geraint Lewis and Mr Gareth William Jones.

2 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Half Yearly Meeting held on 30 June 2005 were confirmed with the following amendment:

- 11.2 Libraries Representation
 Gill John, rather than Ffion Lloyd, to represent Newport.

3 MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Culturenet Cymru: Books from the Past

Following the transfer of Culturenet Cymru to the National Library of Wales it was reported that a decision had not been made as to the future of this specific scheme. It was noted that ten additional texts would be added to the site this year, five Welsh-language and five English-language, making a total of 19 books in all.

3.2 Friends of the Books Council

Mr Elwyn Jones reported on the activities of the Friends and referred to the General Meeting that was held recently in Aberystwyth.

It was noted that new members had been elected to the Steering Committee during the Annual Meeting and that Professor Wynn Thomas had thanked the retiring members, especially Rheinallt Llwyd who had been a very active secretary.

It was noted that the Chairman of the Friends, Mr Alun Creunant Davies, had passed away since the Annual Meeting and a tribute would appear in the next issue of *The Friend*.

The membership at present stands at 406.

4 CHARITY COMMISSION

The Chairman reported that the Charity Commission's report had been distributed to members and that he was pleased to say that it commended the Council's procedures and administration.

The officers would respond to the comments and consult on specific matters as and when necessary.

5 GRANTS FOR 2006/07

The Treasurer presented a paper outlining the likely situation regarding grants from the Welsh Assembly Government for 2006/07, noting that an increase is unlikely. He reported that the Executive Committee had discussed the situation earlier that morning and that discussions were ongoing with the Assembly Government.

Mr Mark Williams noted that the present funding cycle had proved very difficult for a number of reasons and that the Assembly had not yet confirmed the final budget.

6 MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND PANELS

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

It was noted that the officers would invite the Friends of the Books Council to nominate two representatives on the Executive Committee and Council.

The Executive Committee had nominated Catrin Puw Davies to be a member of the Nominations Panel. The nomination was confirmed.

7 REPORTS ON DEPARTMENTAL ACTIVITIES

7.1 Children's Books Department

The Head of the Children's Books Department presented a report on the Department's work and referred to some of the highlights:

- Book Clubs

It was noted that the present term was the most successful ever in the club's history since it was established over twenty-two years ago. Orders to the value of £40,000 had already been received. A report was also given on the events held during T. Llew Jones's 90th birthday celebrations.

A report was given on ways of increasing the number of counties participating in the English-language books competitions. The 2004 *Carnegie* award winner, Frank Cottrell Boyce, had recently published a novel set in North Wales, and had agreed to address the children during the National Round.

- Schools Scheme

It was reported that the statistics for the primary and secondary schools scheme were satisfactory at present and it was hoped to reach the targets set by the end of the financial year.

7.2 Marketing Department

The Head of the Marketing Department referred to a number of marketing schemes arranged again this year to promote Christmas books.

The annual supplements, namely *Gwledd y Nadolig* and *Books from Wales*, had been widely distributed and a series of advertisements had been arranged to appear on S4C. These schemes had certainly contributed to the tremendous sales recorded in November and the Distribution Centre's staff, Wendy Morris and the sales team were thanked for their work.

This year again, a colour advertisement for adult books had been secured in the *Western Mail* and *Daily Post*, as part of the Grants Department's generic advertising scheme.

He also referred to the work of the Overseas Marketing Officer, Helgard Krause, in connection to the Frankfurt Bookfair. The Department had received several thank-you notes from the publishers expressing their appreciation of her help.

The *gwales.com* website had received one million visits during November and the Head of Department was confident that the site would reach the sales targets set for the year. It was also emphasised that the electronic sales through the Distribution Centre were increasing.

It was noted that efforts to develop a special module of *gwales* for libraries were proceeding smoothly. The purpose of this module is to create a site that will allow all the information that is available to *gwales* users to be available also to librarians in a way which will enable them to search and order books electronically.

Councillor John Meirion Davies, who is also a bookseller, welcomed these developments by the Marketing Department to promote books.

8 PRESENTING THE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2004/05

Mr W. Gwyn Jones, Honorary Treasurer, presented his comprehensive report on the 2004/05 accounts.

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 2005/06 AND ESTIMATES 2006/07

The Treasurer presented the estimates. Attention was drawn to the fact that there probably would be no increase in the grants for 2006/07 and as a result cutbacks would need to be sought in the budget.

It was noted that these cutbacks had been discussed in detail in the Executive Committee and had been approved.

10 APPOINTING AUDITORS TO AUDIT THE ACCOUNTS FOR 2005/06 AND 2006/07

The proposal of the Executive Committee that Mr Llŷr James be appointed as auditor of the Council's accounts for the next two years, 2005/06 and 2006/07, at a cost of £4,750 per annum, was accepted.

11 PRESENTING THE ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2004/05

During her report on the year's work, the Director paid a warm tribute to the late Mr Alun Creunant Davies, former Director of the Books Council, who had recently passed away.

She referred to his unique talents in the pioneering role of leading the Books Council in the early years and his notable contribution in promoting and developing the book industry in Wales. She noted that it had been a privilege to succeed him as Director and that she was pleased that he had lived to see the Books Council continue to develop and flourish. This had been a great joy to him.

She noted that the Annual Report clearly shows that the developments over recent years had started to bear fruit and that more changes were on the horizon. She emphasised that the publishing industry could not stand still, and that this inevitably meant changes within the Council, as well as within the industry. She referred specifically to the developments within the Grants Department that had boosted sales, and to the far-reaching Kewley/Richardson report on the representation service that was core to all the Books Council's work.

In conclusion, she thanked the staff for their dedication and for their willingness to take on additional responsibilities. She also thanked the Chief Officers for their consistent support, and thanked all the members of the Council, Executive Committee and all the panels for giving unstintingly of their time and expertise.

The Director and staff were thanked by Mr Richard Houdmont who wished the Council well in its preparations for a new chapter in the books industry in Wales.