

**“What is living? The broad hall
found between narrow walls”**

Waldo Williams tr. Rowan Williams

Operational Plan 2023/24



CYNGOR LLYFRAU CYMRU
BOOKS COUNCIL of WALES

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1 Wales: A Reading Nation

As we embark on this new financial year, the second of our current Strategic Plan, our sector along with all of Wales faces the stark realities of the ongoing cost of living crisis. We are immensely grateful to Creative Wales and Welsh Government for providing additional one-off funding to mitigate against those challenges.

The stark reality of almost a decade of standstill funding is impacting our sector and wider work now more than ever. As has been the case in recent franchise rounds, grant recipients will face ever greater competition for grants, necessitating difficult funding decisions from our independent panels. The combination of a flat budget and increasing costs means that fewer titles will be supported by our core grants, as well as the number of titles supported by our service departments. We are particularly concerned for English-language Magazine Franchises which will be advertised this summer; we expect a number of new entrants participating in the process, and additional funding would allow us to support innovation and new topics whilst not putting existing providers at risk. One-off project funding is always welcome, but brings with it the dilemma of short-termism which – for an industry with longer commissioning and lead-in times – can be challenging.

It is difficult to estimate how consumer and institutional sales will be impacted by inflationary pressures in this coming year, and investment by Welsh Government in providing books to schools will continue to be a crucial component.

Responding to the Welsh Government's International Strategy, we believe that our sector – and Wales as a whole – has much to gain from international showcasing opportunities, such as international book fairs which, as content fairs typically reach into other creative sectors. We will continue to advocate on behalf of, and provide practical support to, partners such as Cyhoeddi Cymru Publishing Wales (CCPW) to realise a presence for Welsh companies at these major events.

However, we are determined to continue to innovate, to invest in digital infrastructure and to achieve our ambitions laid out in our Strategic Plan. The most central of these is our firm commitment to fair representation, including

on our Board of Trustees, sub-committees, advisory groups and judging panels. We will continue to take proactive steps to ensure that our sector produces content that reflects the diversity of Wales and that we attract underrepresented communities to contribute as authors, designers and publishing professionals.

Here it will be in the specific and targeted interventions that we can make the most difference, and we are therefore delighted to have had the enthusiastic support of Creative Wales leading to additional funding to further invest in the New Audiences Fund: we will build on the success and learn from those projects which did not reach their full potential. Most importantly, we will remain open to new ideas and projects and encourage the widest possible engagement with our sector.

People and their creativity are the greatest asset of any publishing endeavour and we will continue to invest in training and skills, serving the sector as a whole, our staff and volunteers.

We will continue to work with partners to ensure that barriers are removed, to critically examine our policies, procedures and structures to make them equitable and accessible whilst keeping the administrative burden for grant applicants to a minimum.

We will continue to strive to find a fair balance with regard to the use of public funds vs the need to service a wide constituency of readers, whilst also acknowledging that Wales is also part of a wider British perspective. As we serve a bilingual country, we are cognizant of the very different current contexts and pressures in which Welsh and English operate and the newly published census data will provide a useful baseline. We look forward to supporting the newly created Welsh Government owned company Adnodd to ensure that funding goes further, and that existing infrastructure is used to support the Curriculum for Wales.

The Belonging programme, funded by the Education Department, will be an excellent opportunity to enrich the offer available to children and young people, ensuring that current gaps in provision are filled by adapting and commissioning new titles identified by an independent panel of experts.

Our role is to serve the book sector in Wales, enabling it to bring into being content that delights and informs. We can only achieve this by ensuring that this content resonates with readers in Wales as well as further afield and that it truly reflects Wales and all its communities. Our vision of Wales as a Reading Nation continues to inform our reading promotion activities, and we will continue our cooperation with Welsh Government to deliver a number of agreed projects whilst also investigating how we can invest and engage in new activities which resonate better with schools, libraries and other community partners.

The work to update our digital infrastructure at the Distribution Centre continues, and whilst new systems are continuing to be implemented a particular focus will be the accessibility of our corporate website and documents this year to ensure that potential visitors to or users of our site are not excluded or face unnecessary barriers.

We will continue to investigate ways of making our supply chains carbon neutral and a major contribution will be investing in battery storage to maximize the output of the PV panels at our Distribution Centre, which has been made possible by Welsh Government capital grants. In addition, we are not only looking at how to make Castell Brychan energy efficient but to create a community asset, and we are looking forward to discussing those plans with Creative Wales.

2 Our Mission

Our main objectives, as set out in our constitution, are:

- (a)** to encourage and support the book industry in Wales by awarding grants and otherwise;
- (b)** to encourage, promote and assist the production and distribution of books and other literary and artistic material howsoever recorded (whether by known means or by means as yet unknown) in the two official languages of Wales, Welsh and English, or which are of Welsh interest;
- (c)** to organise events to support the promotion of books, reading and the book sector as a whole;
- (d)** to encourage and promote the publication of such books and other material in Wales.

3 Our Values

We believe

- ▶ in the transformative power of reading for pleasure and that it impacts positively on our well-being, mental health, educational attainment, and social and cultural capital
- ▶ in supporting a publishing sector that is open and welcoming, thrives on creativity and collaboration, and produces quality content that makes a positive contribution to the lives of people and the foundational economy in Wales
- ▶ that we need to be proactive in developing the sector to attract the people, skills and experiences that reflect all of Wales
- ▶ that the diverse cultures and languages of Wales enrich all aspects of our lives and communities
- ▶ that everyone should have access to books and magazines in print, digital or audio formats irrespective of their ability to afford them
- ▶ y Gymraeg belongs to all of us and is an integral part of our daily lives, heritage and culture
- ▶ that the many and multifaceted stories of Wales connect us to the wider world and help us to promote our nation within Europe and more globally.

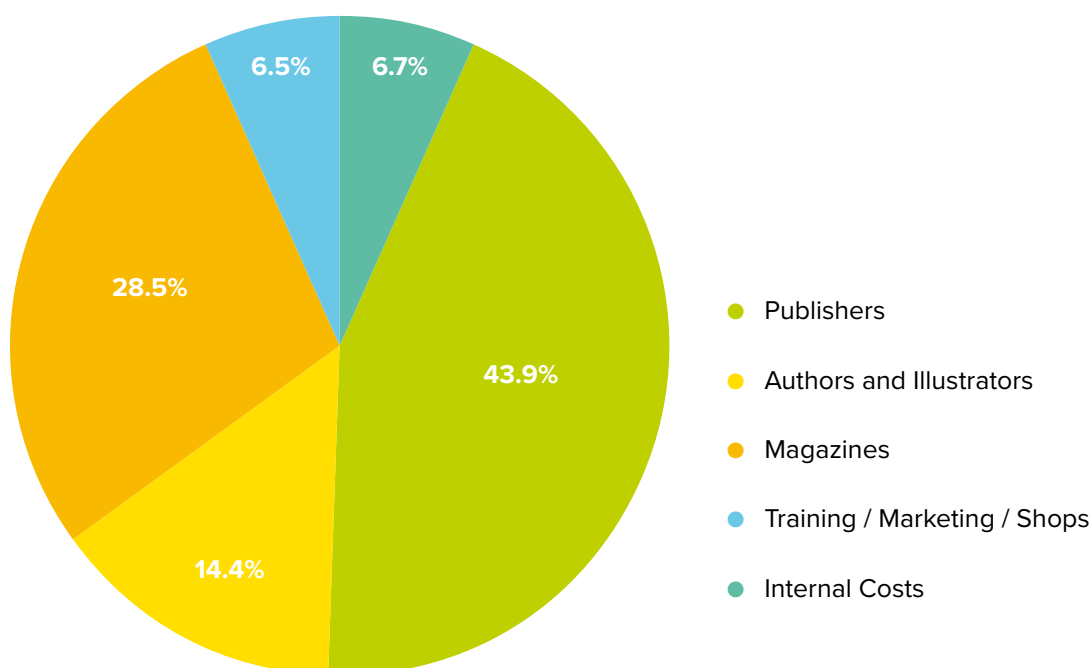
4 Our Plans

After two years of operating within the confines of the COVID emergency we are looking forward to start implementing the second year of our 5 year strategic plan. We will embrace our new realities as we find them: building on some of the rapid change and positive opportunities brought during these two years, but also acknowledging and mitigating the deep impact on our lives, especially those aspects most affected such as audience-based events in schools and the community, in-person meetings, international fairs and conferences. Whilst our core function remains the same, which is to fund and support the book sector in Wales, our strategic plan clearly outlines our priorities with a strong emphasis on fair representation, challenging incumbency and sustainable business. The multifaceted positive impact of reading was brought into stark relief in wider society, and we intend to build on this by increasing our #LoveReading campaigns and working towards wider engagement, but working with both existing and new partners.

4.1 Publishing Development

The purpose of our grant schemes is to ensure that a wide range of high-quality books that reflects Wales in all its diversity reaches the market in both Welsh and English. Publishing in both languages can pose significant commercial challenges for very different reasons and Government support (through the Books Council) is key to ensure that Wales and the people of Wales are featured in its print culture, in paper-based products and online, in books and magazines, and that these products in turn promote and enrich the nation's civic life both culturally and politically.

The impact and reach of the publishing grant



4.1.1 Welsh Language Content

In the context of Welsh-language publishing, the purpose of our grant schemes is to provide a wide range of high-quality and engaging books that mirror the large range of interests represented in Welsh-language readers of all ages. Publishers in Wales are mainly micro enterprises, mostly located in rural areas across the whole of Wales, and as such have a profound impact on the foundational economy. We support publishers to improve the quality of books, and to increase the variety of books and magazines published; we support high-quality authors, designers, and publishers to write, illustrate, design and edit Welsh-language books and magazines. We will work with existing publishers to improve diversity in terms of content and

the workforce and make every effort to ensure that opportunities and support are available for individuals to venture into publishing for the first time. We will work closely with the sector to ensure that the appropriate policies are adopted and implemented; that barriers are removed, and ensure development opportunities for Welsh speakers from minoritized backgrounds. We are committed to challenging incumbency and proactively seek opportunities to attract new applicants and audiences, both within the existing grant system and for any additional project funding. We will continue our support for Cwlwm Cyhoeddwy and Cyhoeddi Cymru Publishing Wales with regards to training skills, best practice, and presence at international bookfairs.

Objective	Benchmark or evaluation method	Target 2023/24
Welsh Language Content		
Books		
Implement the Investment Survey 2022 and work with the publishers to put new publishing programmes and corresponding editorial posts in place by April 2024.	Agree on new publishing programme contracts by April 2024	Discuss publishing contracts
Support the production of a wide variety of quality books for adults and children.	No. of programme books produced	133
Support specialist titles that have made a valuable cultural contribution, and support smaller publishers to publish popular books through the Individual Publishing Grants.	Number of individual grant titles published	35
Ensure children's books provide a good balance between adaptation and original content (in line with the recommendations of the Rosser Report, 2017).	The medium-term aim is to achieve parity between originals and adaptations	50% original
Ensure investment in good quality authors.	No. of titles supported through Author Grant (A)	20
Ensure investment in visually appealing books, which are well designed and with engaging content.	No. of titles supported through Visual Grant (A)	25
Ensure that publishers market books to the widest possible audience and ensure that every book reaches its own market potential.	Average sales for books supported by programme grants	800 after 18 months
Ensure that the original books produced are also available as e-books.	Percentage of original relevant funded books that are converted into e-books	80%

Give support to publishers by providing 75% funding for creative editor posts.	No. of jobs [FTEs] supported	12
Continue to provide training for editors by offering courses and mentoring sessions.	No. of training sessions	5
Provide support for marketing activities by publishers, ensuring that booksellers are an integral part of any promotional events and activities.	No. of marketing grants provided	50

Objective	Benchmark or evaluation method	Target 2023/24
Welsh Language Content		
Online Welsh-language News Service		
Establish new services additional to the present services by Golwg 360.	Quarterly reports to be received promptly and showing progress against relevant criteria	100%
Maintain the present news service Golwg 360.	Quarterly reports to be received promptly and showing progress against relevant criteria	100%
Magazines		
Ensure a variety of printed and online Welsh-language magazines are funded and reach a diverse and growing market.	No. of magazines produced	14 2 development plan 2 pilot scheme
Monitor average sales.	Sales to be reported in September 2023	Leisure – 2,600 News – 1,500 Children's – 2,700 Literary & Cultural – 700 Development plans – 350 Establish 2 pilot schemes – History and Sport
Ensure magazines are produced and delivered to market on a timely basis.	Regular publishing schedules	98%

4.1.2 English Language Content

The purpose of supporting English-language publications from Wales is to ensure that there is a significant English-language publishing industry in Wales that produces a diverse range of titles that reflect the unique culture of Wales, by publishing authentic voices drawn from the variety of lived experiences represented in our communities. English-language titles from Wales compete within the highly commercial publishing industry which is focused on international best-sellers. The purpose of our grant is to ensure that new voices from Wales have an opportunity to be

published, that people in Wales have access to high-quality content that is relevant to them, and to support publishing output which represents Wales in all its diversity at an international level. We will continue to work with the sector to strive for fair representation with regards to authors, illustrators, topics and themes funded by us and will use the latest census figures as a benchmark to measure our impact in this particular area. We will continue to report to the Board of Trustees and Creative Wales by providing regular updates of our Fair Representation Report.

Objective	Benchmark or evaluation method	Target 2023/24
English Language Content		
Books		
Ensure a variety of books that give insight into the rich multicultural communities of Wales and generally enrich the programme of those publishers supported via the Revenue Franchise Grant.	No. of Revenue titles published	44
Support independent Welsh publishers to remain competitive with major publishers by awarding funding to retain developed authors or to develop new talent via the Author Advance Grants.	No. of books published that have Author Advances awarded	15
	Average sales expected for titles in receipt of Author Advance Grants	1,000
Support niche titles which make a valuable cultural contribution via the Individual Literary Book Grants.	No. of titles published in receipt of a grant	30
Encourage the use of imaginative marketing strategies aimed at reaching the widest possible market with a focus on generating vital sales revenue via the Marketing Grant.	No. of books published with marketing grants provided	20
	Average sales expected for titles in receipt of a marketing grant	2,000
Support strategically important posts within the sector by providing grants of up to 75% of wage cost for marketing and editorial posts.	No. of full-time posts supported	9
Provide training opportunities for publishing staff.	No. of training sessions provided to publishers per annum	2
Support the publication of new editions of classic titles from English-language Welsh literature with the launch of a Classics Grant.	No. of titles published	3

Objective	Benchmark or evaluation method	Target 2023/24
English Language Content		
Magazines		
Support established digital and print magazines that have a history of contributing to Welsh culture and provide a vital platform for high-quality content, analysis and debate on a wide range of subjects with the Cultural Periodicals Grant.	No. of titles funded	5
	Minimum sales values, across print and digital platforms	1,000
	'General' cultural magazines	400
	Multi-focused literary magazines	300
	Single-focus literary magazines	300
Undertake a tender process for English-language Magazines aiming to maintain standards and offer new opportunities in the field.	Conduct a successful process in good time for 1 April 2023	Conduct the process
Support small-scale digital and print publications that showcase a variety of new creative talent with the Small Literary Magazines Grant.	No. of titles funded	4
Ensure magazines are produced and delivered to market in a timely manner.	Content published to an agreed schedule	98%
Measure and report on the digital reach of magazines, with a view to encouraging widening that reach.	Books Council digital reporting matrix	100% submitted

4.2 Services to the Book Sector

The wide range of services we provide to the book sector have very distinct purposes and are broadly based on the following areas:

- **Content Development:** to ensure and develop a high quality of editorial and design standards for books from Wales, with a particular focus on developing key areas;
- **Marketing & Promotion:** to support and amplify the efforts of individual publishers and bookshops and provide collective platforms with regard to particular themes or events. Industry and sector to attend festivals, events, conferences and fairs;
- **Digital & Data Management:** to support internationally adopted data systems to ensure accessibility of information about content from Wales and provide access to a standard book trade system such as EDI and BATCH; provide and develop platforms such as ffolio.wales and gwales.com;
- **Sales & Distribution Services:** distribution and wholesaling to independents, chains and online retailers, reaching new audiences worldwide; bespoke field-based sales services to libraries, schools, and tourism & heritage sectors; curate meaningful and relevant offers to support the differing needs and requirements of a diverse customer base.

Objective	Benchmark or evaluation method	Target 2023/24
4.2.1 Content Development: Editing & Design		
Offer proofreading and copy-editing services to publishers, together with advice and guidance to the creative editors working in the publishing houses.	No. of manuscripts edited	170
Provide a design service of the highest quality to publishing houses, and work with smaller publishers to improve the visual aspect of their publications.	No. of book covers or design projects undertaken	110
Provide feedback to Publishing Development Sub-committees with regard to grant applications and areas requiring improvement.	Feedback given when sought	100%
Provide guidance to the sector through training and advice.	Involvement in relevant training arranged	100%

Objective	Benchmark or evaluation method	Target 2023/24
4.2.2 Marketing & Promotion		
Support the industry		
Support and promote booksellers and publishers equitably, providing information and opportunities for them to take advantage of Books Council promotional activity on digital and offline platforms and at events if they so wish.	Contribute to regular meetings with booksellers and publishers (CCPW/ Cwlwm) to share opportunities and gather feedback	Representative from the Comms Team to be present at meetings with the sector
Supporting bookshops: continue to prioritise #ChooseBookshops messaging in social media content, and support independent bookshops through national initiatives such as independent shops week, bookshop day and others.	Amplify national/ UK bookshop campaigns. Include #ChooseBookshops messaging wherever appropriate	Ongoing throughout the year
	Share content from shops and publishers on social media where BCW is tagged	
Supporting publishers: continue to promote and celebrate new publications, for example through campaigns such as Book of the Month, providing opportunities for publishers to amplify promotion by supplying extra content as they wish.	Work with publishers to provide a regular programme of Book of the Month content	Ongoing throughout the year
Continue to produce 2 consumer book catalogues per year (summer and winter) in good time to promote new titles ahead of key sales periods.	<i>Summer of Reading</i> and <i>Festive Reads</i> to be published and distributed in good time to booksellers.	Deliver 2 catalogues a year supported by promotional activities
	Catalogues to be supported by distribution plan and digital assets	
Continue to develop a library of branded social media and digital assets for bookshops and publishers to use, to support quality content and promotional materials across the sector. In consultation with the sector, create materials for key dates and events that can be repurposed annually. Gather feedback on what works and what doesn't to develop and improve the resources available.	Timely availability and communication of seasonal digital assets, as agreed with the sector	Ongoing throughout the year

Objective	Benchmark or evaluation method	Target 2023/24
Support Reading for Pleasure		
Create and deliver engaging, timely multi-platform promotional campaigns (e.g. World Book Day, Summer Reading Challenge, Reading Well/Darllen yn Well, Tir na n-Og) that reach target audiences. Demonstrate impact through analytics and evaluation.	Timely promotional campaigns and post-campaign evaluation	Ongoing
Create content that inspires and celebrates reading for pleasure, for children, young adults, adults and learners. We will test and evaluate new ideas to engage and reach new audiences, seeking out partnerships and platforms to share and coproduce new content.	Develop the series of #CaruDarlle / #LoveReading podcasts for adults and continue the new series of podcasts for children's literature (in both Welsh and English) that were started in 2022.	6 #CaruDarlle podcasts a year 6 children's literature podcasts (3 Welsh/English)
	Test new content on social media channels, and develop content plan for that channel to reach and engage with family and school audiences.	Regular posts on LlyfrDa/FabBooks
	Maximise opportunity offered by AM and continue partnership to create and share new content on our channel.	Weekly content on our AM channel
Establish a panel of young people with the main objective of sharing their voice and opinion.	Create an online campaign that encourages young people to evaluate and discuss books	Continue to maintain and increase young people's interest in reading for pleasure
	Listen to the voice of the panel in order to identify opportunities to develop new and appealing reading material	
Promote access to books for all.	Promotion of libraries and sharing of libraries' content across our social media channels. Promote platforms such as Ffolio, audio books and e-books.	Ongoing

Communications		
Communications and brand guidelines demonstrate that the sector is open and welcoming to all. Our values are reflected in our key messages across all channels and content, and we work with partners in the industry to reach diverse audiences and stakeholders with our news stories	Partnership working Develop and deliver comms strand to focus on BCW impact and work	Ongoing
Continue to review the Books Council's website https://books.wales to inform decisions re-editorial function, content, optimisation and analytics.	Ensure website recommendations in place. Implementation of website content and editorial plan throughout 2023/24	Ongoing
In line with the priorities in our Strategic Plan, particular support/emphasis will be given to activity which demonstrates commitment to investing in diverse content, authors and formats.	Activity that advances diversity in Welsh publishing will be amplified	Ongoing

Objective	Benchmark or evaluation method	Target 2023/24
4.2.3 Digital & Data Management		
Provide, update and expand the offer and functionality of ffolio.wales and gwales.com	No. of e-books available	1,500
Extend the use of bibliographical data standards such as ONIX 3, THEMA and ISNI to ensure that information about content from Wales is fully and freely available internationally. Provide training to publishers as needed.	Training sessions provided on metadata to publishers	1
Extend the use of EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) to facilitate electronic order processing and communications with booksellers, wholesalers and other customers such as libraries.	EDI succession plan in place	Transfer to Nielsen
Continue to develop the Council's own website https://www.books.wales to ensure ease of access to stakeholders regarding grants, services and information.	Regular website improvements	Ongoing
Use data analysis tool to improve all digital platforms.	No. of websites with Google Analytics	3

Objective	Benchmark or evaluation method	Target 2023/24
4.2.4 Sales & Distribution Services		
Ensure a quality distribution service to all publishers, and that sales recover following COVID restrictions – especially in the tourism sector.	Distribution Centre sales	Gross sales: £4m Net sales: £2.64m
Maintain excellent relationships by adding value through bespoke services and curated offers which are relevant to a wide range of customers such as Cadw, Waterstones, WHSmith, Gardners and Amazon.	Net sales	£900,000
Develop the sector in the North by offering new options and targeting new locations.	Net sales	£900,000
Develop the sector in the South by offering new options and targeting new locations.	Net sales	£900,000
Promote the use of gwales.com and ffolio.wales by working closely with the marketing team and by offering excellent customer services with regard to enquiries and after-sales support.	Sales to individuals	Gross sales: £75,000
	No. of registered gwales users	17,000
Support independent bookshops through the Outreach Scheme, support for publisher and author events, regular bookseller meetings and advice on digital developments and business opportunities.	Impact of Outreach Scheme	Additional sales generated: £100K
Continue to review and evaluate the environmental impact of packaging materials and carriage arrangements by reducing the use of plastic and reducing unnecessary journeys and/ or working in partnership with other carrier arrangements.	Target level of returned books	10%
Provide the best customer experience by ensuring that all enquiries are answered in a professional and courteous manner in both languages.	No. of phone calls answered by customer services team	95%

4.3 #lovereading – Promoting the Value of Reading

The appreciation for and love of books and reading runs right through our organisation. Helping all people, but especially children, to form a lifelong habit of reading is central to our work. Our emphasis is on reading for pleasure, which is not immediately tied to educational attainment. Research shows how

regular reading supports several positive outcomes, in terms of mental health and well-being as well as educational and professional success. Our programmes aim to raise the profile of, and promote, children's books in both languages within school and leisure settings.

Objective	Target 2023/24
Advocate for the Welsh Government to adopt a plan to gift a book annually to schools across Wales as a core funding priority.	Use the evaluation of the Iechyd Da scheme to advocate for an annual book gifting scheme to schools in Wales
Liaise with Welsh Government officers, education consortia and local authorities to promote reading for pleasure and other curriculum resources, such as the <i>Children's and Young Adults' Yearbook</i> and other materials and digital content to support the delivery of the curriculum.	Regular dialogue with stakeholders about materials that promote reading for pleasure and educational resources. Establish a Love Reading Teachers network to inspire and raise the awareness of the various books available to KS2 learners
Promote reading for pleasure within schools by coordinating the Big Welsh Read and Grwpiau Darllen Cymru reading challenges, ensuring that they are aligned with the aims and objectives of curriculum development.	Promote the list of books to improve teachers' knowledge of titles. Celebrate reading by taking advantage of the opportunities to 'talk about my favourite book' creating an opportunity for all learners to develop oracy skills and reading for pleasure
Extend partnerships with libraries, and facilitate links with schools and access to books.	Establish a network of stakeholders to assist in compiling a comprehensive review of the school library provision in Wales
Support Welsh Government's National Literacy Programme by • coordinating the activities to celebrate World Book Day 2024; • supporting the Summer Reading Challenge in conjunction with schools and libraries. Emphasis will be placed on targeting and reaching pupils within disadvantaged areas throughout Wales; • continuing the Quick Reads/Stori Sydyn series to target reluctant readers, both children and adults.	New additional £1 Welsh-language title Increased curated Wales-specific content for SRC website Evaluation of Quick Reads campaign
Ensure coverage of publications, projects, or news relevant to the areas of children's and young adults' literature in Wales on the @LlyfrDaFabBooks social media accounts.	Increase in traffic within social media accounts as a result of specific campaigns (e.g. World Book Day, Tir na n-Og)

Promote and organise the Tir na n-Og Awards to recognise excellence in the field of children's books in both languages and increase diversity in the judging panels to reach more diverse communities. Ensure the widest possible promotion throughout the media in Wales. Evaluate and provide feedback on submissions to develop the provision of R4P material for young readers.	Increase of 20% in schools participating in shadowing scheme Media presence across all platforms during campaign Feedback via judges' report to Publishing Development Sub-committee Diverse membership within judging panels
Collaborate with members and representatives of partner organisations on the Reading Promotion Sub-committee to identify and develop reading for pleasure opportunities. Provide feedback and guidance on the development of children's and young adults' literature to the Publishing Development Sub-committee, by arranging a biannual Reading Promotion Books Sub-committee.	Regular dialogue with partners to share and develop R4P messaging Establish a partnership of representatives from the Reading Promotion Sub-committee to act as advisers to the Publishing Development Sub-committee Review diversity of Children's Books Sub-committee
Arrange Author Tour campaigns – working with authors, publishers, booksellers, schools and libraries across Wales to increase the opportunities for children to meet a diverse range of authors.	Coordinate a programme of regular digital and live author events with partner organisations
Collaborate with partners such as Mudiad Meithrin to create lists of suitable books and promote books that are suitable for learners	Establish '5 dan 5' – a monthly post on social media that promotes new, diverse and original books suitable for children under 5 years of age. Mudiad Meithrin will share the post with all their cylchoedd and stakeholders

4.4 Our Impact: Research & Evaluation

We will increase our investment in research and evaluation of our current activities in order to

use the evidence to help us further develop our activities, with a particular focus on the following:

Action	Outcome
Commission an external evaluation of the New Audiences Fund, to consider questions of the process of applying, how we responded, what participants achieved, and the difference made by the fund.	To gain participant feedback on the ease of process allowing us to improve accessibility both for one-off projects and other funds as well. To hear the participants' feedback on what they achieved and the difference it made in their communities. To practically inform future funding opportunities.
Continue internal evaluations via sub-committee assessments, reader reports and staff assessments of titles, themes and authors funded. Report formally to the Board via the Fair Representation Reports.	Ensure that work towards fair representation continues and grants are directed at priority areas.
Invest in supporting and training publishers to use the industry standard data classification systems THEMA and ONIX more widely.	Ease of data analysis by running subject specific reports. Classifications applied by the IP holder not by the funding.
Investigate the feasibility of research into the reading habits of harder-to-reach readers through cooperation with the organisations Sport Wales, Football Association of Wales, Welsh Rugby Union, Young Farmers, National Farmers' Union, Race Council Cymru, Disability Arts Cymru.	Give particular attention to non-Welsh-speaking audiences and how to engage them with Anglophone content from Wales. Give particular attention to accessibility and format needs to widen participation.
Feed the KESS PhD findings on the internationalisation of children's literature into the business plans of the Children's Books and Reading Promotion Department.	Target setting based on recommendations with regard to content and IP development in view of the ambitions for a national presence at international book fairs.
Review the evaluation of Iechyd Da scheme held in 2022.	Assess impact of scheme and further recommendations.
Organise and carry out an evaluation of Quick Reads/Stori Sydyn provision within Wales.	Assess impact of the effectiveness of current activities, especially with a view to increasing participation.

5 Our Organisation & key operational priorities

The priorities outlined in our 5-year strategic plan provide clear direction for all our departments, with a strong emphasis on fair representation: this not only applies to the content, businesses and jobs we support but also to our own organisation. Whilst our board, sub-committees and judging panels are measurably more diverse, we continually strive to ensure that all aspects of our work truly reflect all our communities in Wales. The decarbonisation of the sector we support and of our Distribution Centre continues to be a priority as we face the global climate emergency.

- Ensure that departments receive regular finance reports to use the Council's funds sensibly ensuring value for money.
- Undertake a full review of long-term pension options with Dyfed Pension Scheme to reduce future liabilities.
- Ensure that the Operational Plan helps us to deliver Welsh Government policies, including the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

5.1 Governance

- Hold four board meetings during the financial year.
- Hold an annual meeting for trustees and the membership.
- Continue to implement the current Strategic Plan.
- Continue to deliver a training programme for trustees as required.
- Ensure that safeguarding policies are reviewed on a regular basis.
- Ensure that the environmental impact of our work is assessed regularly.
- Ensure that the risk register is reviewed and updated on a regular basis, and that efforts are made to minimise risks.

5.2 Finance

- Implement the Operational Plan by ensuring that the budget provides adequate funding and resources to deliver our mission.
- Prepare the annual statutory accounts for 2022/23 by the agreed deadlines and receive a clean audit report.

5.3 Communications & Branding

- Implement and deliver the 2023/24 Communications Plan, to support the objectives and delivery of the 5-year Strategic Plan.
- Embed the Books Council Brand Guidelines, including guidance on Creative Wales branding requirements, and acknowledgement of Welsh Government sponsorship as appropriate.
- Launch new BookHub.Cymru brand for the Distribution Centre that resonates with the commercial nature of the work and promote its services.
- Continue to work closely with Creative Wales to develop a coordinated and integrated approach to marketing and communications.

5.4 Information Technology

- Implement the new system in a timely manner, ensuring effective collaboration with the service provider and reporting regularly on progress to the steering group and Board of Trustees, with regular reports on system development.
- Undertake a programme of staff training to ensure they have the necessary skills for the needs of the business which will transform

the way our business works, enabling us to compete and operate safely and effectively.

- Expand the use of the SharePoint system internally and encourage its use to share information with committees, publishers and booksellers, in order to save on printing and posting and to share information regularly.
- Investigate new systems which support online meetings of the Board of Trustees, the sub-committees, the Management Team and departments.
- Prioritise work that strengthens the Council's ability to deal with a cyber-attack and aim to meet the requirements of Cyber Essential Plus by the end of 2023.
- Update the hardware and networks of both sites to accelerate processing and to reduce the risk of losing data or time due to network loss.

5.5 Human Resources

- Expand use of BrightSafe system ensuring that all members of staff undertake Health and Safety training at least once a year.
- Ensure that every member of staff has a current job description, with targets set for them as part of the annual appraisal process.
- Identify opportunities to train and develop members of staff for them to gain flexible and transferable skills that will enable them to respond to any new opportunities, and make the most effective use of the technology.
- Ensure best use is made of the Books Council's HR system – BrightHR.

5.6 Fundraising

- Collaborate with the Head of Children's Books and Reading Promotion Department to make a bid for a £7 book token for secondary schools, county councils and housing associations.
- Collaborate with Board members to develop opportunities with corporate sponsors.
- Review the terms of the Friends of the Books Council looking at a campaign to encourage new members.

6. Our Partners

Working collaboratively lies at the very heart of our work, and is best illustrated by the wide range of partnerships we have built over the years and will continue to build. We are extremely pleased to be collaborating with the following:

Welsh Government	General • Exchange information and experience about grant schemes and commissioning books Creative Wales • Liaise closely with the officials responsible for sponsorship of the Books Council • Support officers regarding the distribution of funding to the sector in response to the cost of living crisis • Explore further opportunities to support the sustainability and growth of the publishing sector, including support for events and book fairs • Proactively support cross-sectoral cooperation in the wider arts, making the most of the content output already supported through the grants system • Contribute to skills development in the sector • Contribute to furthering diversity and inclusion in the sector and increasing representation in published materials Education and Public Services Department Curriculum & Assessment Division • Support Curriculum for Wales 2022 through: › proactively engaging with Areas of Learning that will benefit from leisure content supported by our grants system › providing a holistic overview of available resources and assisting in developing strategies to reduce reliance on English-language publishers • Run programmes to support the National Literacy Programme and the objectives of the Child Poverty Strategy • Coordinate World Book Day activities and the reading promotion schemes as part of the Welsh Government's National Literacy Programme • Collaborate on the Quick Reads/Stori Sydyn project as part of the Basic Skills Strategy • Contribute to the Steering Group for new resources for the new curriculum and proactively encourage partnership working within the publishing sector
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Welsh Government
continued

Welsh Language Division

- Continue to support Cymraeg 2050 by working closely with the National Centre for Learning Welsh and supporting specific initiatives such as:
 - Cymraeg Campus
 - Contribute to the Language Technology Board
- Cooperate with the National Centre for Learning Welsh by continuing to encourage and support publishers to add to Cyfres Amdani, the series for learners, and identify other gaps in resources

Economy, Skills and Natural Resources Department

Tourism Development and Major Events Division

- Support Prosperity for All through continuous investment in skills and training for the book sector which is part of the foundational economy in rural Wales
- Promote books as part of the Welsh Government's themed years programme (Trails – 2023)

Culture Division (Museums, Archives and Libraries)

- Maintain and develop the gwales/libraries website for use by the libraries
- Administer the Summer Reading Challenge grant to libraries
- Utilise the grant for distribution of Darllen yn Well (Reading Well) titles to local authorities/libraries

Health and Social Services Department

- Administer the Reading Well scheme for the publication of books on well-being and mental health in collaboration with The Reading Agency
- Collaborate with Public Health Wales to ensure community engagement with the Reading Well scheme
- Proactively promote the scheme in libraries and bookshops

Department for International Relations

- Support the three pillars of the International Strategy (2020) – Creativity, Sustainability and Technology – and contribute content to This is Wales
- Support the thematic year of 'Wales in France'
- Contribute to the stakeholder group meetings

Arts Council of Wales / Wales Arts International / Literature Wales	• Cooperate on the Book of the Year awards • Literature Wales to contribute to World Book Day activities • Contribute to the development of an international strategy for Literature from Wales • Cooperate on future London Book Fair events with CCPW • Cooperate on opportunities for courses in Tŷ Newydd • Participate in Literature Wales bursary panels • Continue to maintain Literature Wales' attendance in an ex-officio capacity of BCW Publishing Development Sub-committees • Cooperate on the Bardd Plant Cymru scheme • Joint bid for Culture Delegation to Frankfurt Book Fair
National Library of Wales	• Cooperate on exchanging information between NLW catalogue and gwales database • Provide additional services such as home delivery for shop customers
National Museum Wales	• Exchange information on relevant projects
Race Council Cymru	• Continue to build on established relationships and seek opportunities for further collaboration
Diversity and Anti-Racist Professional Learning (DARPL)	• Continue to work together on the <i>Belonging</i> project and seek other opportunities for further collaboration
Disability Wales	• Continue to build on established relationships and seek opportunities for further collaboration
Future Generations	• Continue to work to support the objectives of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and the well-being goals
Booksellers Association of the United Kingdom and Ireland	• Cooperate on existing schemes such as Books Are My Bag • Assist in the establishment of Bookselling Wales • Explore opportunities for a Wales-specific Christmas catalogue
Independent Publishers Guild	• Liaise on adapting their skills hub for the sector in Wales • Share industry insights and learnings
Cyhoeddi Cymru / Publishing Wales	• Exchange information on relevant projects • Continue to cooperate regarding a national presence for Wales at international book fairs with Wales Literature Exchange / Creative Wales
Wales Literature Exchange	• Exchange information on relevant projects • Continue to cooperate regarding a national presence for Wales at international book fairs with CCPW / Creative Wales
Publishers Association	• Liaise on best practice to reduce environmental impact • Liaise on fostering greater diversity and within the workforce
The Bookseller Magazine	• Share information about the Books Council and the publishing industry in Wales through <i>The Bookseller</i> • Prepare a supplement to coincide with the annual Wales Focus and include additional news stories for the industry

Bookshop.org	• Support bookshops to join the platform and develop distribution partnership • Explore direct distribution partnership to ensure inclusion of Wales-related titles
The Reading Agency	• Deliver the fifth Reading Well scheme in the Welsh language • Deliver the Summer Reading Challenge
BookTrust Cymru	• Participate in a reading promotion scheme, explore further cooperation opportunities, and exchange information on relevant projects • Exhibit at BookTrust Cymru conferences
Read for Good	• Extend the existing scheme, making more books available to children's wards in hospitals
Empathy Lab	• Develop and coordinate a bespoke programme for Wales in both languages
Libraries	• Exchange information with CILIP Cymru Wales especially concerning school librarians • Exhibit at the annual CILIP Cymru Wales conference or support the event online • Arrange the Tir na n-Og Awards, partly sponsored by CILIP Cymru Wales (Kathleen Cooks Bequest) • Cooperate with the Society of Chief Librarians Wales on reading promotion schemes
Urdd Gobaith Cymru	• Promote the Tir na n-Og Awards and the Welsh-language Children's Poet Laureate • Support the presence of a bookshop at the festival • Support the membership magazine
Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Cymru	• Provide editorial and design services for award winners and publications • Attend their central literary panel in an ex-officio capacity
Hay Festival	• Support the presence of a bookshop at the festival
Royal Welsh Show	• Support the presence of a bookshop at the festival
AM Platform	• Continue to develop our channels and provide regular content on the platform • Support publishers and booksellers to expand use and presence on the platform

S4C / BBC / ITV and other media providers	• The Welsh-language Children's Poet Laureate (Bardd Plant Cymru) • Promotion of the Tir na n-Og shortlist and winners on Radio Wales, Radio Cymru and S4C • Identify opportunities to promote reading and books by means of specific programmes • Engage with commissioners on a regular basis to discuss turning books into programmes
Other Welsh Government Sponsored Bodies	• Cooperate on staff training and HR matters with a particular focus on diversity and inclusion in general • Liaise with members of Grŵp Hyrwyddo'r Gymraeg (Welsh Language Promotion Group) and share relevant information, identifying shared learning and training opportunities, especially with regard to diversity and inclusion within a Welsh-language setting
Welsh Universities / FE Colleges	• Seek partnerships with Welsh universities who may be able to conduct in-depth research into particular fields which are of interest to BCW, e.g. marketing or children's books • Continue to promote the book sector as a career choice by attending career fairs, contributing to modules, or enabling work placements
Wales TUC Cymru	• Build on the relationship established during the National Year of Reading with a view to promoting books and reading in the workplace
Transport for Wales	• Tales on the Rails scheme, National Poetry Day • Investigate additional opportunities for cooperation
WJEC	• Share information regarding commissioning educational reading materials

7. Financial Information

The sums allocated by the Welsh Government for 2023/24 are shown below (no change apart from the Capital Grant).

	2022/23	2023/24
Core Funding – Creative Wales	£	£
Towards Specialist Departments	837,754	842,801
Governance and Central Costs	291,524	286,477
	1,129,278	1,129,278
Capital Grant	230,000	30,000
Grants for Distribution		
Publishing Grants	2,600,722	2,600,722
	3,960,000	3,760,000

The appendices present detailed estimates for 2023/24.

Project funding is also available in 2023/24 from the Welsh Government's Department for Education and Skills:

Reader Development Schemes	£140,000
Belonging Project	£100,000

Project funding is also available in 2023/24 from the Welsh Government's Culture Division:

Reader Development Schemes	£22,200
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Project funding is also available in 2023/24 from the Welsh Government's Department for Health (indirectly via Reading Agency):

Reading Well Scheme	£47,500
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It will be possible to undertake all the work described in this Plan in accordance with the funding allocated by the Welsh Government for 2023/24.

Appendix 1

Budget 2023/24

Income

£

Creative Wales Core Funding (Welsh Government)		
Specialist Department Direct Costs	842,801	
General Overheads and Running Costs	286,477	
Capital Grant	30,000	
Grants to be distributed		
Publishing Grants	2,600,722	
Other sources of income for projects:		3,760,000
Welsh Government: Department for Education and Skills		
Reading Promotion Schemes	140,000	
Belonging Scheme	100,000	
Welsh Government: Culture Division		
Reading Promotion Schemes	22,200	
Reading Agency		
Reading Well Scheme	47,500	
		309,700
Departmental Income		189,820
Distribution Centre		2,900,000
Total Income		7,159,520

Expenditure

Specialist Department Direct Costs	1,022,301	
Central Services and Governance Costs	296,797	
Project expenditure		
Reading Promotion Schemes	162,200	
Belonging Scheme	100,000	
Reading Well Scheme project	47,500	
Capital Costs	30,000	
Grants to be distributed		
Publishing Grants	2,600,722	
Distribution Centre	2,900,000	
Total Expenditure		7,159,520

Appendix 2

Breakdown of Costs 2023/24

Expenditure

	SALARIES	OTHER COSTS	INCOME	NET	TOTAL
Specialist Department Direct Costs					
Communications, Marketing and Design Department					
Communications and Marketing	112,410	116,925	80,000	(36,925)	149,335
Design	109,170	4,100	25,000	20,900	88,270
Book reviews	—	5,000	—	(5,000)	5,000
Corporate Department					
Sales	148,891	36,350	—	(36,350)	185,241
Finance and Customer Services	222,007	31,968	50,000	18,032	203,975
Outreach Scheme	—	25,000	—	(25,000)	25,000
Publishing Development Department					
Editorial	110,533	7,000	17,500	10,500	100,033
Children's Books and Reading Promotion					
Reading promotion activities	56,382	36,565	7,000	(29,565)	85,947
Total Specialist Department Direct Costs	759,393	262,908	179,500	(83,408)	842,801
Governance and General Overheads					
IT and Communications	—	69,181	—	(69,181)	69,181
Buildings	—	51,618	6,320	(45,298)	45,298
Other governance costs	144,010	31,988	4,000	(27,988)	171,998
Total Costs	144,010	152,787	10,320	(142,467)	286,477
Grant administration	187,601	23,000	210,601	187,601	—
Welsh Government Education project	82,200	80,000	162,200	82,200	—
Belonging project	36,000	64,000	100,000	36,000	—
TOTAL REVENUE COSTS	1,209,204	582,695	662,621	79,926	1,129,278
Capital Grant					30,000
Grants for distribution					
Publishing Grants					2,600,722

Appendix 3

Publishing Grants 2023/24

Grants for Distribution 2023/24

£
2,600,722

Welsh-language Publications

	£
Programme Publishers	347,734
Individual Publishing Grants	116,000
Performance Payments etc.	8,100
Supported Posts and Training	214,348
Payments to Authors and Illustrators	362,000
Marketing	31,000
Booksellers	23,000
Magazines	380,000*
Support for the Welsh-language Press	200,000
Vision from the Siwan Rosser Report	4,000

Total Welsh-language Grants	1,686,182
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English-language Publications

	£
Cultural Periodicals Grant	180,000
Revenue Publishers Grant	206,100
Individual Literary Book Grant	68,000
Small Magazines Grant	7,000
Training Grant	4,000
Author Advances Grant	54,000
Supported Posts Grant	119,600
Marketing Grants	47,905
Classics	4,000
Publishers Association	3,000

Total English-language Grants	693,605
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Administration	220,935
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Total Grants	2,600,722
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*An additional sum of £135,000 will be distributed to the Welsh-language magazines from funding received in 2022/23 that has not been included in the above.