

<b>Report to</b>	Welsh Language Steering Committee
<b>Date of meeting</b>	16 March 2021
<b>Lead Member / Officer</b>	Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts/ Nicola Stubbins
<b>Report author</b>	Manon Celyn, Welsh Language Officer
<b>Title</b>	Activities to promote the Welsh language

### **1. What is the report about?**

This report is about Welsh Language promotional activity.

### **2. What is the reason for making this report?**

To update Members on the Welsh Language promotional activity since the last meeting and the outline plans for the year ahead.

### **3. What are the Recommendations?**

To note the activity during 2020 and to approve the proposal for the 2021 promotional activity.

### **4. Report details**

#### **Staff Eisteddfod**

The Council held its third Eisteddfod between February 15<sup>th</sup> and March 1<sup>st</sup> as part of St David's Day celebrations. The event is part of the Council's efforts to raise the profile and gain a better understanding of the language, and to celebrate the culture of Wales. It comes at a time when there significant attention on the Welsh language and the fact that the Urdd Eisteddfod is due to return to the county in May 2022. This year, as a result of covid and the majority of staff working from home, we had to be a little more creative and so the Eisteddfod went digital. We used our private staff facebook page as a location to hold the Eisteddfod and promoted various categories for staff to compete in by uploading a picture to go with each category. The response and support received exceeded our expectations and there was a lot of engagement from staff. The digital Eisteddfod was very successful with 163 entries and over 700 votes.

## **Paned a Sgwrs**

The majority of staff now work from home therefore the sessions are being held virtually. We had a very good start to the virtual sessions with a number of staff attending, but the numbers have declined in recent months. This was due to the fact that staff needed a break from being in front of the screen over lunchtime so the session time was inconvenient compared to face-to-face sessions. The numbers have risen again in recent weeks and the feedback from staff has been extremely positive. Weekly written tasks have been prepared for staff in order to develop their writing skills in Welsh.

## **Owain Glyndŵr Day**

This year to celebrate Owain Glyndwr's day, the Council shared a video it had produced on its corporate social accounts. The video shows Glyndŵr's links with Denbighshire and significant places within the county relating to its history. This received very positive feedback from staff and many stated that they were not aware of Glyndŵr's history in Denbighshire.

## **'Mae gen i hawl' (I have rights) campaign**

This is a campaign to celebrate the Welsh language services that Denbighshire offers, and the rights that people have to use Welsh when dealing with them. It was an opportunity to promote Welsh language services and to try to increase the number choosing to use them. The marketing campaign mentions some of the rights held by the public as well as Council staff.

In September, external messages were posted on our social media on a weekly basis with pictures of staff who speak/learn Welsh noting their responsibilities and how the Welsh language benefits them within their post. The messages have generated a great deal of positive attention on our accounts with people praising our staff.

## **Shwmae Sumae Day**

Again this year we were part of the Shwmae Sumae day celebrations on the 15th of October. The day is intended to promote the idea of starting each conversation with a 'Shwmae' or 'Su'mae' with the aim to show that the Welsh language belongs to everyone – fluent speakers, learners or if you are shy about your Welsh. Again, it was difficult to create something new so we shared a few messages on our social accounts as well as sharing the video we made last year of the red dragon mascot

(Dewi Draig) being filmed using the Council's Welsh language services. The dragon passed a rugby ball to other members of staff after saying "shwmae" or "sumae", those members of staff then did the same. The idea behind this was that the Welsh language was the rugby ball and that we were passing the Welsh language on.

### **Partnership working**

Meetings of the Language Partner have continued virtually. Although we have not been able to continue with some of our plans for the time being, such as the County's mapping of Welsh language activities, we have discussed the impact Covid has had on the Welsh language within different organisations and a member of staff from the Welsh language Commissioner was invited as a guest speaker to discuss this topic from a national perspective. A very useful session where we can act on several suggestions from them and draw up a plan for the coming year.

### **November Tasks (Tasgau Tachwedd)**

During November we presented short and fun tasks for staff to complete on our private staff facebook page. The aim was to engage with staff through the medium of Welsh and to try to get them to use Welsh and think in Welsh while working from home. It is a difficult and challenging time at the moment to keep the momentum going for Welsh learners as they don't hear or see as much Welsh as they would in the office, especially if they don't live with anyone who speaks the language.

### **St Dwynwen's Day**

A quiz was created about the history of St Dwynwen as part of the day's celebrations this year. It was shared internally and externally on our social media with over 30 people taking part. We also created a document of relevant Welsh vocabulary and phonetics to help Welsh learners.

### **Welsh language music day (Dydd Miwsig Cymru)**

We created a playlist of Welsh songs to share with staff and encouraged them to play the playlist at home, at work or when traveling in the car. We also promoted the new song for 'Nerth dy ben' campaign, 'Byw i'r awr' (Live for the hour) which is a campaign to remind each other of our strengths and courage, especially during these challenging and difficult times. It also shows the positive effect music has on your mental health which is an important message as a lot of staff are currently working from home. The majority of the artists shown in the music video are former pupils at Ysgol Glan Clwyd.

## Promotion of the Welsh language standards

We've created documents to promote the Welsh language standards to share on Denbighshire Today, LINC, visiontime and staff facebook page. It's a form of checklist for staff to ensure they comply with the standards. We have already promoted the standards for answering the phone, arranging meetings and correspondence.

## St David's Day

The staff Eisteddfod was the main event to celebrate St David's day again this year, but we also shared information on our social media about St David's history, relevant Welsh vocabulary and phonetics to help Welsh learners and the interesting facts about why the leeks and daffodils are the national symbols of Wales as well as the reason behind wearing them on St David's Day.

### 4.5 Next steps: Proposed timetable of activity for 2021:

MONTH	ACTIVITY
March 2021	Welsh language staff survey
April 2021	Promotion of our Welsh language social media
	Provide a document for Leisure Centres, Libraries and receptions with relevant Welsh vocabulary to help Welsh learning staff
May 2021	Create a video to reinforce the Welsh language standards and include the video in HR induction video.
June 2021	Promotion of bilingual greeting on the phone policy
	Welsh Language Strategy 2022-27
	Welsh speaker/Welsh learner on staff emails
July 2021	Promotion of bilingual 'Out of office' messages
August 2021	Create a document of Welsh vocabulary for staff to use during meetings to encourage staff to start and finish meetings in Welsh.
September 2021	Owain Glyndŵr Day
October 2021	Shwmae Su'mae day
	Welsh learning week
November 2021	'I have rights' campaign
December 2021	Christmas – greeting in Welsh in shops

## **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

The decision contributes to the development of the Welsh Language and culture, which underpins the Council's Corporate Plan.

## **6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

There is no funding available for this work. Any costs would be absorbed by the current partners and through the goodwill of members.

## **7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?**

Whilst no formal Well-being Impact Assessment is needed for this report, it is worth noting some of the key benefits in relation to the Well-Being and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language Standards.

One of the key components of the well-being and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is having: "A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language : A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation".

The Council also has a role, through its Welsh Language Standards, to promote opportunities for local communities to get involved in Welsh Language activities.

## **8. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

The main risk is a potential decline in the number of Welsh speakers in the county (as measured by the national census). All partner organisations have also committed to contributing towards the development of the Welsh language nationally and towards the million speakers target set by the Welsh Government by 2050.