

WELSH LANGUAGE STEERING COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Welsh Language Steering Committee held by video conference on Friday, 8 July 2022 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Ellie Chard, Ann Davies, Gill German, Huw Hilditch-Roberts, Merfyn Parry, Huw Williams and Emrys Wynne

ALSO PRESENT

Corporate Director: Communities (NS), Welsh Language Officer (MC), Team Leader - Communications and Campaign Management (GW), Committee Administrators (SW (Host) RTJ)

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received by Councillor Elfed Williams.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Emrys Wynne declared a personal interest in agenda item 8 as he worked with the Eisteddfod working group.

3 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Nominations were sought for the appointment of Chair; Councillor Huw Williams proposed Councillor Ellie Chard, which Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts seconded; there being no further nominations, it was put to the vote and

RESOLVED that Councillor Ellie Chard be appointed Chair of the Welsh Language Steering Committee for the current municipal year.

4 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

The Chair invited nominations for Vice Chair; Councillor Emrys Wynne proposed the item be deferred until the next meeting as no nominations were not proposed, and there were some members absent from the meeting.

RESOLVED that the appointment of the vice chair be postponed until the next meeting.

5 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

No urgent matters were raised.

6 MINUTES

The minutes of the Welsh Language Steering Committee held on 8 March 2022 were submitted.

RESOLVED that, subject to the above, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 March 2022 be received and approved as a correct record.

7 WELSH LANGUAGE MONITORING REPORT

The Team Leader – Communications introduced the Annual Welsh Language Monitoring Report (previously circulated)

In accordance with the Welsh Language Standards introduced under the Welsh Language Measure (Wales), 2011, the Council was required to publish an annual report by 30 June outlining the work undertaken to comply with the Standards requirements between 1 April and 31 March. This report focuses on the 6th year of the implementation of the Welsh Language Standards; the past two years have been very different from the norm. Denbighshire County Council was fully committed to responding positively to the Welsh Language Standards as was reflected in its Welsh Language Strategy 2017-2022 and remains fully committed to playing its part towards the national effort to increase the number of Welsh speakers to a million by 2050.

The Council's main focus in 2021-22 was on implementing the Welsh Language Standards within the authority to ensure compliance with the 167 Standards under the headings Service Planning, Policy Making, Promoting and Record Keeping. To achieve this, it was essential to work closely with the Welsh Language Champions across the Authority. Monitoring staff compliance when most of the workforce was still working from home. We continue to support the workforce more than ever with the implementation of the standards, and our target was to double the daily use of Welsh. We would do this by promoting Welsh language courses for staff to embark on their language journey or confidence-building courses and in-house activities to help staff develop and foster their Welsh language skills.

The Council was an active partner of the Welsh Language Partnership led by Menter Iaith Sir Ddinbych. This Forum was made up of several organisations, both local and national, working towards the strategic promotion and development of the Welsh language in Denbighshire.

Denbighshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan to 2032 contains information about the proposed merger of the Welsh in Education Strategic Group with the County's Language Forum to oversee the implementation and evaluation of the plan.

Over the past year, we have undertaken a great deal of crucial work in promoting and facilitating the use of Welsh internally and externally to ensure that the Language Standards are implemented.

The Council held its fourth Eisteddfod between 18 February and 1 March as part of the St David's Day celebrations. The event was part of the Council's efforts to raise the profile and ensure a better understanding of the Welsh language and also to

celebrate Welsh culture. It was held during a period of considerable focus on the Welsh language with the imminent return of the Urdd Eisteddfod to the County in May 2022. Once again this year, because of Covid-19, the Staff Eisteddfod was held digitally.

'Mae gen i hawl' (I have a right) campaign - This was a national campaign to celebrate the Welsh services offered by Local Authorities and people's rights to use Welsh in their dealings with them. It was an opportunity to promote Welsh language services in Denbighshire and increase the number choosing to use them. The marketing campaign talks about some of the rights the public, as well as Council staff, have.

The committee discussed the following further –

- Councillor Emrys Wynne thanked the Corporate Director: Communities, the Welsh Language Officer and Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts, the previous lead member for the Welsh language, for their work carried out within the report. He agreed with the impact that remote working has had on socialising and communications. One of Councillor Wynne's ambitions as a lead member was to ensure that people could use the Welsh Language and there would be no detrimental impact of doing so.
- The budget associated with the Welsh Language was raised, and members were informed that any costs associated with the Welsh language were to be absorbed by the service budget.
- The opening of committee meetings was raised as some members thought each meeting required to open in the Welsh; however, not all meetings were. The Welsh Language officer would share the information with members to encourage committee chairs to open public meetings in Welsh.

RESOLVED the Welsh Language Steering Committee note and approve the report.

8 EISTEDDFOD YR URDD

The Team Leader – Communications (TLC) introduced the report providing a follow up to the recent Eisteddfod yr Urdd (previously circulated)

Eisteddfod yr Urdd returned to Denbighshire last month (30 May to 4 June) following a two year wait. The original festival was due to take place in May 2020, but was delayed due to Covid.

First Eisteddfod which had Gwyl Triban and had free entry which helped that people attended. More contestants from Denbighshire from any other county in Wales. Which was a testament to the work carried out by the education department. 118,000 people attended the Eisteddfod throughout the week.

Marque Sir Dinbych included the following –

- Theatre
- Business promoting area
- Art and craft section

- Countryside and Youth services which were highlighted BMX track was very busy.
- A multitude of performances
- Political visits throughout the week.

Throughout the week, the tent was very well visited, and a lot of families from the Rhyl / Prestatyn area, which was a demographic which did not usually attend the Eisteddfod.

Art was produced by the refugees who came to the area, highlighting similarities between the cultures.

It's also hoped that the local economy and tourism trade would have a lasting legacy, with more and more people visiting the county and the wider North East Wales region. Many people visiting Denbighshire's marquee commented it was their first time in the county and that they would return to spend more time there. The Urdd would carry out an economic impact study in the near future.

The Council should also work closely with the Urdd and other community partners to identify opportunities to benefit from the Urdd's interest and host other regular events that would maintain some of the buzz and momentum.

The committee discussed the following further –

- The committee were all in agreement that the Eisteddfod was an outstanding achievement was nice to have a gathering following the challenges of Covid. The variety on the Maes was an excellent opportunity to promote the Welsh language. The committee hoped the local economy would benefit from the Urdd.
- Councillor Gill German thanked Denbighshire and Urdd staff for the Eisteddfod; the event made her want to learn the Welsh Language further.
- The Corporate Director: Communities wanted to thank the team on behalf of the Council and the senior team in the Council and bring the council closer to the community.

RESOLVED that the Welsh Language Steering Committee note the Eisteddfod yr Urdd follow up report

9 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The committee's forward work programme was presented for consideration.

Members raised the following matters –

- Officers agreed to discuss any additional items for the committee outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED that, subject to the above, the Committee's Forward Work Programme be received and noted.