

Report to	Welsh Language Steering Committee
Date of meeting	8 November 2022
Lead Member / Officer	Gary Williams / Councillor Emrys Wynne
Report author	Manon Celyn, Welsh Language Officer
Title	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 2022 and to approve the proposal for the 2023 promotional activity.

4. Report details

Bilingual Workforce

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

Staff Eisteddfod

The Council held its fourth Eisteddfod between 18 February and 1 March as part of the St David's Day celebrations. The event is part of the Council's efforts to raise the profile and ensure 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 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. Our private staff Facebook platform was used to hold the Eisteddfod and to promote the

various categories for staff to compete in by uploading a photo to accompany each category. Categories included Pet in the Best Condition, Most Talented Pet, Before and After/Old and New, a sentence from the the words DEWI SANT, my favourite place in Denbighshire and many more. To encourage more people to take part in the Eisteddfod this year it was decided that all Council staff should be adjudicators. They chose the winners by 'liking' photos/videos on the Facebook page and those with the most 'likes' were the winners. The response and support received was extremely encouraging again this year with a good level of staff engagement.

The Urdd Eisteddfod in Denbighshire

The Urdd Eisteddfod returned to Denbighshire this year and was held at Kilford Farm on the outskirts of Denbigh. Preparations for the Eisteddfod began in 2018 however it had to be postponed twice because of the Pandemic. The work of arranging the Eisteddfod re-started in 2021 with many busy months leading up to the event itself.

Denbighshire County Council was one of the Eisteddfod's main sponsor this year and we were also sponsored the two shows – the primary schools' show 'Ni yw y Byd' (We are the World) and the secondary schools' show 'Fi di Fi' (I am Me).

We had a large marquee on the Eisteddfod field and our theme was 'Discovering Denbighshire'. The marquee had several different sections which concluded of a theatre, business / tourism, arts and crafts and countryside. It was an extremely successful Eisteddfod and Denbighshire's marquee was busy all day, every day. It was lovely to see so much excitement and buzz on the maes after such a long time.

Paned a Sgwrs

Sessions are still being held virtually. Numbers reduced during 2021 as a result of the sessions being virtual, but they have risen again over the last year and the sessions are going from strength to strength. We have a face to face reading clubs once a month at Denbigh and Ruthin Libraries. Staff choose a book from the 'Amdani' series which is suitable for learners and read it by the next session where the book is then discussed, giving learners the opportunity to use Welsh to express their opinions. These sessions have been very successful to date with staff favouring the face to face sessions. Weekly written tasks are also prepared for staff in order to help them develop their written skills.

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. We promoted the day on our social accounts by sharing relevant and useful Welsh words, with phonetics to help learners, to use in the café, pub, office, meetings and library as well as sharing the video we made 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 "su'mae", 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.

Combining the Welsh Language in Education Strategic Plan and the Welsh Language Partnership Group.

Denbighshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan up to 2032 includes information regarding the intention to merge the current Welsh in Education Strategic Group with the County's Welsh Language Partnership Forum in order to oversee the implementation and evaluation of the plan. During the last year the efforts from members of both groups have been to combine the Partnership Forum and the Welsh Language in Education Strategic Plan following the model of Anglesey Council and Carmarthenshire County Council.

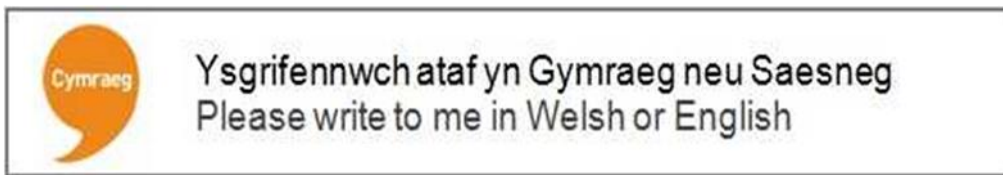
This means that each meeting will be divided into two parts with one part specifically for Education and the other specifically for the Partnership Forum. There will be a minimum of 3 meetings during each year and it is intended to have an independent Chairman. The main advantages of this structure will be to ensure that there is a clear strategic direction, reduce the duplication of activities and increase the opportunity for the benefit holder to collaborate with each other.

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.

Iaith Gwaith (Working Welsh) Logo / Sentence at the foot of e-mails

Welsh speaking staff include a logo at the bottom of their e-mail signature so that customers and colleagues know that they can speak Welsh. We have also developed a logo for learners with the words 'Dw i'n dysgu Cymraeg' (I'm learning Welsh) to include with their e-mail signatures and many are using it.



Promoting the Welsh Language Standards

We have created documents promoting the Welsh Language Standards to share on the council staff Facebook page, in our daily newsletter, on our intranet and our visiontime system. It is a checklist for staff to ensure that they comply with the standards by following the guidelines given. Templates include information on answering the phone bilingually, arranging meetings and corresponding. We have also created a document of relevant Welsh words for staff and councillors to use in meetings in order to encourage them to start and end meetings in Welsh.

Videos to promote the Welsh language

As many things have gone online or digital over the past 3 years we have had to be a little more creative in the way we promote the Welsh language to keep the momentum going. We have promoted many videos created by us such as a video on how to pronounce Welsh words and sentences that are useful for meetings and how to pronounce the names of some of Denbighshire's towns and villages correctly. All the videos are shared internally and externally on our corporate Facebook page and have been shared many times by the public.

'Cysgliad' software

Following discussions with the IT department we have downloaded the 'Cysgliad' software on all DCC staff's laptops. The software is very useful for staff who are fluent Welsh speakers and learners who are giving their Welsh a go as they include two useful tools - a dictionary and a Welsh language grammar checker. The process in the past consisted of staff having to ask for it, and many staff were not aware that it

was available. So following the download of the software the Welsh Language Officer has been encouraging staff to use it and offering 3 dates of training on how to navigate the software. Around 30 members of staff have taken advantage of the training so far.

Welsh Language training and courses

We promote Welsh lessons very often and a large number of staff take advantage of the opportunity to improve their skills. 8 members of staff have registered for the taster+ course for 6 weeks (2 hours per week) with Coleg Cambria with the intention of proceeding on to the intensive entry level course with a tutor in January. Several members of staff have also taken advantage of the 10 hour online courses which have been tailored for different sectors, as well as residential courses at Nant Gwrtheyrn.

4.5 Next steps: Proposed timetable of activity for 2023:

Month	Activities
October 2022 – August 2023	Internal campaign on ‘Doubling your daily use of the Welsh language’
November – December 2022	FIFA World Cup
November 2022 – March 2023	Welsh Language Strategy
November 2022 – January 2023	Policy on Implementing the Welsh language internally

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.