

Date : 26 February 2003
Time : 9:00 – 12-30
Venue: Committee Room 1

REPORT OF THE MINISTER FOR CULTURE, SPORT AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE

MENTER CWM GWENDRAETH

1. I attended a Celebration Evening of the Welsh Language through Sport organised by Menter Cwm Gwendraeth in Pontyberem, Llanelli on 6 February. It was a pleasure to honour Dr Wayne Griffiths, Chairman of Menter Cwm Gwendraeth on his achievement at being made Manager of the successful Wales team at last year's Commonwealth Games in Manchester. I was also delighted to be able to present awards to young people from the Gwendraeth Valley who had represented Wales in various sports during the last year. The evening demonstrated that the villages of the Gwendraeth Valley are continuing to produce great sportsmen and women who are helping to promote the Welsh Language through sport.

EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL AND MINORITY LANGUAGES

2. On 23 January I met with members of the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts on the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages. The committee was visiting Cardiff as part of a UK wide visit to evaluate the UK's application of the Charter. I was pleased to be able to highlight how the Assembly Government is putting into practice the commitments towards the Welsh language within the agreement and delighted with the interest expressed in *laith Pawb*.

2001 CENSUS

3. The first tranche of figures from the 2001 Census came out on 13th February. I was extremely pleased to see a reversal of the long term decline in the number of speakers, with an increase in the actual number of speakers

from 508,000 in 1991 to around 580,000 in the 2001 census. The proportion of Welsh speakers now stands at 21% compared to 19% in 1991.

4. Subsequent releases of Census figures by the Office of National Statistics – from March until about September of this year, will provide further detail.

LAUNCH OF NATIONAL WATERFRONT MUSEUM SWANSEA

5. On 10 February, I was present when the First Minister officially launched the National Waterfront Museum Swansea. The National Museums & Galleries of Wales has formed a unique partnership with the City & County of Swansea to take forward the project. The objective of the launch was to persuade those present from the private sector of the importance of the project and to enthuse them to act as ambassadors. In this way, it is hoped that target of £4.4 million pounds from the private sector will be met.

6. In addition to Welsh Assembly Government support, Members will recall that this project is being funded by the largest ever grant in Wales from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Contributions are also being made by the WDA, Wales Tourist Board, and the European Union.

7. I am sure that this exciting project will transform Swansea's marine quarter and that the many thousands of visitors attracted by the new Museum will boost the economy of Swansea, and West Wales in general.

CYMAL: MUSEUMS ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES WALES

8. In my Plenary Statement on 29 January I announced that CyMAL, the new unit being established within the Welsh Assembly Government from 1 April 2004 to develop and implement policies for local museums, libraries and archives, will be located in Aberystwyth.

9. I took this decision because a number of organisations reflecting CyMAL's area of work have a base in Aberystwyth. These include the National Library of Wales, the Department of Information Studies and the Archives and Records Management staff at the University of Wales Aberystwyth, the Welsh

Books Council, and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales. CyMAL will fit in naturally with this network of organisations and will have up to 25 staff largely comprising experts from the sector. There will also be an Advisory Council, chaired by the Culture Minister, which will enable the sector to contribute to policy development.

10. I look forward to working in partnership with the many organisations in the sector throughout Wales as we develop CyMAL and bring about improved services for current and future users. I would also like to thank the Council of Museums in Wales and the Library and Information Services Council (Wales) for working with us to ensure a smooth and effective transfer.

NATIONAL EVENTS STRATEGY

11. Stevens & Associates, the consultants appointed to assist us with the development of the strategy, recently completed an extensive consultation exercise. Responses were received from a wide range of organisations, including the main cultural and economic ASPBs, local authorities, governing bodies of sport, event management companies and venue operators.

12. As the next step, Stevens & Associates will be holding a series of practical workshops for key stakeholders to discuss the emerging issues and to test evaluation criteria. These workshops will be held on 25 February. Following this, the consultants will produce a draft report for consideration by the Events Strategy Group.

NATIONAL LOTTERY

13. On 27 February I am meeting Tessa Jowell and Ministers from Scotland and Northern Ireland to discuss issues arising from last year's Review of Lottery Funding. I will want to use this meeting to press the Secretary of State on the question of greater devolution of her powers in relation to Lottery distribution in Wales, and to make the case for an increase in the percentage share going to the arts and sports Lottery funds in Wales. I will report back to the Committee on the outcome of this meeting in my next monthly report.

THE LICENSING BILL

14. The UK Government's Licensing Bill is currently being taken through the House of Lords. It has not yet gone to the House of Commons. The headline issue has been the proposed introduction of flexible licensing hours, which could allow pubs, bars and restaurants to open for up to 24 hours, seven days a week. But the Bill also proposes:

- a single integrated scheme for licensing premises which sell alcohol, provide public entertainment or provide refreshment late at night;
- the granting of licences to be transferred from magistrates to local authorities (because they are electorally accountable) and the views of local residents to be taken into account in deciding applications;
- licences to be supported by a flexible range of sanctions (including temporary reduction in opening hours) instead of the present all or nothing sanction of loss of licence;
- the abolition of the septennial Welsh Sunday opening polls.

15. Licensing is a non-devolved matter and the Bill is the responsibility of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). Neither my officials nor I were consulted by the DCMS about the licensing provisions. The Bill would not allow the Assembly Government to modify those provisions in respect of their implementation in Wales.

16. I wrote on 30 January to the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport to relay the concerns expressed to me and made clear in my letter that I shared those concerns. I also expressed my disappointment that the Assembly Government had not been consulted about the licensing provisions. I am sending copies of my letter and the accompanying Appendix, which details my concerns, to Committee members.

MEETING WITH CYMRU'N CREU

17. I chaired the seventh meeting of Cymru'n Creu on 13 February. I believe that Cymru'n Creu greatly improves the co-ordination of planning and activity

across all cultural bodies. It is also playing an important role in monitoring and reporting progress on *Creative Future – Cymru Greadigol*.

18. The main agenda item at the meeting was to review a matrix showing progress against the targets from the Action Plans in *Creative Future: Cymru Greadigol*. Just one year on, I am pleased to report that we have made significant progress across the board in terms of long term and short term goals alike.

19. When I launched the strategy last February, I stressed that we were embarking on an ambitious, ground-breaking ten-year programme to place cultural issues higher on the agenda in Wales. I foresaw the first year of *Creative Future* as one where we laid firm foundations. Significant new money has been made available, more organisations have been supported, new strategies have been developed and new challenges identified.

20. I will be reporting in more detail on the progress on the implementation of the Culture Strategy at plenary on 4 March.

REMIT LETTERS

21. I am pleased to say that the remit letters for 2003-04 have been issued to all the Cultural ASPBs and other Cultural bodies largely funded the Welsh Assembly Government. These letters set out my priorities the coming year and the Cabinet's key messages for ASPBs and the other Cultural bodies. The Committee will receive copies in the normal way and the remit letters will also be posted to the Intranet and Internet.

ARTS COUNCIL OF WALES: APPOINTMENTS EXERCISE FOR CHAIR

22. The Assembly Government is currently running an appointments exercise for the post of Chair for the Arts Council of Wales to start on 1 April 2003. The post was advertised in the press in December 2002 and the closing date for applications was 16 January. We will be conducting the interviews on 21 and 25 February. I expect to announce the outcome before the end of the financial year.

VISIT TO THE ARTS COUNCIL OF WALES

23. On 12 February, I visited the Arts Council's West and Mid Wales Office in Carmarthen. As with my visit to the main office in Museum Place, Cardiff last month, the purpose of my visit was to talk to staff and hear their views about working at the Arts Council now that the restructuring exercise is complete. I found the visit most worthwhile and I was impressed by the volume and varying nature of the work which they undertake there. It was a useful insight into the role of the arts development officers who work with project schemes, revenue clients and arts development. I was also given a presentation on the development of the visual arts and crafts under the new structure.

YOUTH ARTS FUND

24. I have asked the Arts Council to establish a Youth Arts Fund which will be a programme funding arts activity for children and young people in Wales. The Fund worth over £1.7 million a year, is to be called "Supporting Young Creativity" and will be launched later today in the milling area. I hope you will all be able to attend the event. The jazz group *Ensemble* will be playing at the launch and the dance group *Dynion* will also be performing. The Arts Council has always been supportive of youth arts, however the creation of this fund, reinforces this commitment and fulfils one of the main aims of *Creative Future: Cymru Greadigol*.

CAPITAL OF CULTURE

25. The Finance Minister has agreed that a further £199,000 will be provided in 2002-03 to support the team that is developing Cardiff's bid to become European Capital of Culture 2008. This funding matches a similar contribution from Cardiff County Council and will be used to further develop links within Wales, the United Kingdom and Europe. It will also be used to take other cultural projects forward.

26. I understand that the announcement on the United Kingdom's nominated city will now be made in June

**MINISTERIAL COLLOQUY OF THE EUROPEAN MINISTERS
RESPONSIBLE FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS - STRASBOURG 17
FEBRUARY.**

27. I was pleased to represent the UK at this meeting of European Ministers in Strasbourg. The subject of the discussion was “the new role and new responsibilities of Ministers of Culture in initiating intercultural dialogue, with due regard for cultural diversity. ”

28. This is an important topic, of direct relevance to Wales, and builds upon the discussions and contacts I have previously initiated with the European Union and with the Assembly of European Regions. I will provide a further oral report to Committee on the 26th.

ASSITEJ

29. ASSITEJ is the International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People. Wales is hosting a visit in March 2003 by the ASSITEJ Executive Committee to the Agor Drysau festival in Aberystwyth as an integral part of a strategy to attract the 2008 triennial ASSITEJ Congress to Wales. This builds on a successful visit made to the 2002 Congress, held in Seoul, at which a bid was put forward by Wales for the Congress to be held in Wales as part of the Agor Drysau (Opening Doors) festival of theatre for young audiences.

30. ASSITEJ is the main international network supporting the development of Theatre for Young People. Every three years it holds a Congress and Festival that attracts between 800 and 1,000 international participants and observers.

31. Agor Drysau is Wales' international festival of theatre for young audiences. The event is primarily held in Aberystwyth and is run by Cwmni Arad Goch, one of the eight companies that make up Wales network of theatre for young people companies. The next festival takes place from 25 to 29 March 2003. Jeremy Turner, Artistic Director of Cwmni Arad Goch, is a member of ASSITEJ's Executive Committee.

32. In July 2002 Peter Tyndall, Chief Executive of the Arts Council of Wales, and Jeremy Turner attended the ASSITEJ Congress in Seoul to make a bid for Wales to host the 2005 Congress. The Congress decided, however, that the 2005 event should be held in Montréal but strong indications were made that a bid by Wales for the event to take place here in 2008 could be successful.

33. I am delighted to report that the Assembly Government is providing a grant of £11,000 to bring the ASSITEJ Committee to Wales in March.

Jenny Randerson AM

Minister for Minister for Culture, Sport and the Welsh Language

Contact Point:- Paul Massey, ALSD, tel x5821

Annex

MINISTER'S VISITS FROM 22 JANUARY – 26 FEBRUARY 2003

January

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| Open Mic Session | Pembroke College, Haverfordwest |
| Attend Higher Education and the Future of Sport Dinner | UWIC Cardiff |
| Speech + Attend Premiere Screening of animated film 'The Wild Thornberrys'. | UCG Newport |
| Launch Exhibition of Spanish and British Art | Bute Street, Cardiff |

February

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| Attended Celtic League Final | Millennium Stadium, Cardiff |
| Attended Russell Sheppard Memorial Trust Recital | Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, Cardiff |
| Attend and Speak at Dinner with Menter Cwm Gwendraeth | Pontyberem Hall, Cwm Gwendraeth |
| Launch of Out There Productions | YMCA, Port Talbot |
| Attend Lansing Linde Severnide Trophy Athletic Association Wales | UWIC, Cardiff |
| Attend Reception to mark National Waterfront Museum | Swansea |
| Visit ACW Carmarthen Office | Carmarthen |
| Attended BBC National Orchestra of Wales Benefit Concert NCH Cymru | St Davids Hall, Cardiff |
| Ministerial Colloquy on Culture | Strasbourg |
| Attended Reception for New Partners Award Winners | Swansea |
| Attend Wales –v- England | Millennium Stadium, Cardiff |