

Culture Committee CC 04-03 (p5)

Date: 26th February 2003

Venue: Committee Room 1

Title: Position statement by the Minister re: policy review: Anglo-Welsh culture (scoping session)

Purpose

To provide a position statement in relation to the Committee's policy review of Anglo-Welsh Culture

Consideration

That the Committee considers the following as information for the review in view of the proposal that the main topics should be English Medium Welsh literature, English medium Welsh drama (theatre), and English medium Welsh Drama (television and film).

Creative Future:Cymru Greadigol

The Assembly Government's Culture Strategy *Creative Future: Cymru Greadigol* gives a good indication of the position of Anglo-Welsh culture. The strategy says that "Bilingualism is a jewel in our national crown". The aim is to see the living reality of bilingualism reflected across the range of Wales' cultural and sporting life. There are opportunities for all people to participate in the arts, sport and other cultural experiences through the medium of Welsh and English. Another important feature of Creative Future is the emphasis on Cultural Diversity, recognising the impact of other cultures on our own in Wales.

Sgript Cymru

Sgript Cymru is an ACW revenue funded organisation whose remit is to encourage, nurture and develop new drama in Wales. The company does this bilingually. It has received a significant increase in funding this year in addition to the 15% increase received by all ACW revenue clients in 2002-03. Along with Clwyd Theatr Cymru, Sgript Cymru are key to taking forward the development of Anglo-Welsh playwriting

Screen Writing

ACW are piloting a new scheme for individual screenwriters. Sgrin and ACW Lottery film funding is committed to the on-going development of indigenous film industry and primarily seeks to achieve this by supporting production companies based in Wales in both development and production projects. The pilot scheme aims to:

- offer an increased opportunity to identify and nurture new talent
- offer more established writers an opportunity to complete a draft screenplay before entering negotiations with a production company
- increase the number of screenplays being developed with a view to providing an extended seedbed from which the Welsh production industry may benefit
- provide opportunities for writers born or resident in Wales or who are developing projects with clear relevance to Wales.

Publishing

In 2001/02 the Arts Council of Wales awarded publication grants totalling £315,084 for periodicals, in both languages.

From April 2003, individual writers services will be delegated to Yr Academi and responsibility for supporting publishing through the medium of English will be transferred to the Welsh Books Council.

Media

Sgrin, the Media Agency for Wales, is responsible for the development of a strategic vision for film, television and new media in Wales. Sgrin aims to raise the profile, support the cultural development and encourage participation in all aspects of film, television and new media. A variety of bodies fund Sgrin, including the WDA, ACW, S4C and BBC Wales.

The National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales, established in 2001, is jointly funded by Sgrin and the National Library of Wales, and is located at the National Library in Aberystwyth.

BBC Wales and ITV Wales commission and broadcast English language television programmes, whilst BBC Radio Wales and a number of independent stations broadcast English language programmes on the radio. The content of the main daily and evening newspapers in Wales is almost entirely in English.

Festivals

Most festivals are music-focussed, but there is one which is driven solely by literature and writing, the Hay Literature Festival in Hay on Wye. Hay is famous not only for the festival but for the fact that 1300 people live there and the town has 39 bookshops. 50,000 visitors converge on Hay from all over the UK, Europe and America to join in a carnival celebration, exchanging ideas and stories, and audiences with many eminent and successful authors. The Arts Council of Wales provides around £37,000 to the festival.

Drama

Cymru Greadigol: Creative Future requires the Arts Council (ACW) to develop a new drama strategy to provide access to professional theatre in Welsh and English. The aim is to increase the production capacity of companies in Wales so that audiences can rely on a steady supply of high quality work.

In addition, the Assembly is working closely with the Arts Council and other key players to develop a national co-ordinated approach to English language theatre in Wales in the context of the opening of the Wales Millennium Centre.

Clwyd Theatr Cymru

In terms of English Language National Theatre, Clwyd Theatr Cymru are designated as the National Theatre of Wales. The Assembly Government is providing £560,000 over 2 years to eliminate the debt CTC owe to Flintshire County Council. The Assembly is also working closely with Flintshire County Council and the Arts Council to put the theatre onto a sound financial basis. This includes looking at how the management arrangements for the theatre building and the production and performing parts of CTC can best be configured.

Theatre in Education

The eight theatre in education companies across Wales work predominantly with new drama scripts in both English and Welsh, either developed by the company or commissioned from playwrights. All the companies received a 15% funding increase in 2002-03. As part of the ACW 5 year strategy, significant development is planned for the extent and range of work to be undertaken by these companies. This will increase the use and availability of new drama created specifically for young people in Wales.

Welsh National Opera

The WNO is a good example of Anglo-Welsh collaboration as it is a revenue client of both the Arts Council of England and the Arts Council of Wales. The funding split is 60:40 respectively. Main-stage WNO productions tour England and Wales. Both WNO and CTC also carry out a large amount of Community Outreach and educational work as does Clwyd Theatr Cymru.

Action for Subject Committee

To consider this position paper in relation to the review on Anglo-Welsh Culture.

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