

## **Culture Committee CC-15-02(min)**

### **MINUTES**

**Date:** Wednesday 17 July 2002

**Time:** 9.00am-12.15pm

**Venue:** Committee Room 1, National Assembly

#### **Attendance:**

Rhodri Glyn Thomas (Plaid Cymru, Carmarthen East and Dinefwr, Chair)

Jenny Randerson (Liberal Democrat, Cardiff Central, Assembly Minister)

Owen John Thomas (Plaid Cymru, South Wales Central)

Lorraine Barrett (Labour, Cardiff South and Penarth)

Delyth Evans (Labour, Mid & West Wales)

Alison Halford (Labour, Delyn)

Rosemary Butler (Labour, Newport West)

Dafydd Wigley (Plaid Cymru, Caernarfon)

**Apologies:** Glyn Davies (Conservative, Mid and West Wales)

**Substitutions:** none

#### **Officials**

Julia Annand (Committee Clerk)

**Declarations of interest:**

- Rhodri Glyn Thomas - member of the shadow board for Cardiff's bid for European Capital of Culture 2008.
- Dafydd Wigley receives funding from the Books Council and his wife is involved in the Arts in Wales.
- Rosemary Butler is Chair of the shadow board of the National Waterfront Museum, Swansea.

**Opening comments:**

The Chair recorded his appreciation of the Committee's work in developing "Our Language: Its Future" which had been launched successfully the previous week. He also said that he would be setting aside time during Eisteddfod week to discuss the report with any interested visitors. He invited Members to join him at the Assembly stand on the Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.

**Item 1: Discussion with the Sports Council for Wales**

Paper CC 15-02 (p1)

Presenters: Gareth Davies, Chair Sports Council for Wales

Huw Jones, Chief Executive, Sports Council for Wales

Gareth Davies and Huw Jones presented the paper, highlighting:-

- The Council is now half way through its strategy "Young People First" and is making progress
- The Council's four priorities are:
  - to increase participation in sport
  - to improve facilities
  - to provide technical information and advice about sport
  - to raise standards of performance.
- Based on per capita, Wales is the most successful athletics nation in the world and more should be done to sing Wales' praises

- The Council is making a contribution to all of the Assembly's priorities
- It was suggested that the Committee should look in particular, at excellence and in the light of this year's Commonwealth Games
- A key issue for the Council is the future of the Welsh Institute of Sport. The facilities at Sophia Gardens are now 30 years old and a bid for additional funding (as had happened in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland) of £12.5m was currently with officials.

In discussion the following points were made:

- The Council agreed that in terms of success, athletics could be regarded as the national sport of Wales. This reflected the fact that it was easier for individuals than teams, to succeed.
- Estimated usage of the Welsh Institute was 3/4m people. Usage by governing bodies was about 36,000 hours and by individuals about 16-18 hours per week for training.
- There are insufficient resources to subsidise everyone, but the Council had advised governing bodies that the level of contributions should be the same for all.
- Although the Sports Council is a national organisation, it also works with local people on local decisions. It has a national panel for national schemes, but regional offices consider applications for lottery funds. Wrexham, Gwynedd and West Wales had done well in that respect.
- On links with other organisations, the Council chairs two meetings a year with Local Authority Principle Leisure Officers. It also has strong links with the Wales Tourist Board, particularly in respect of the Ryder Cup. The Council had also benefited from its membership of Cymru'n Creu.
- The Council is considering options for the provision of facilities once work on refurbishment of Sophia Gardens is underway. This will in part be determined by the way the money is received. The centre could be closed completely or, piecemeal. The Council would look to its partners, particularly local authorities for assistance with sports provision. No work would begin on the Institute however, until April 2004.
- Sports participation figures were available in the Assembly's library.
- There are 104 centre of excellence in sport and 268 sports development centres at local authority level.
- Golf is one of the Council's priorities. It had received £250,000 to increase facilities, particularly for girls.
- Ballroom dancing is supported via DanceSport.

Finally, the Committee agreed to bringing forward the quinquennial review of the Sports Council as discussed in the Minister's report. The Minister said that the interim report should be available in time for the Committee's meeting on 4 December; the final report should be available by January or February.

## **Item 2: Policy Review on Sport**

Paper CC 15-02 (p2)

In introducing this item, the Chair said that the evidence for the review should be taken at each of the five meetings scheduled for next term. The Committee agreed and also agreed to hold an additional meeting on the afternoon of 28 November. The Chair suggested four areas for consideration:

- Lessons to be learned from the Commonwealth Games
- The lack of opportunities for women and girls
- The use of Objective 1 and SportLot resources
- Priorities and resources.

Members offered other areas for consideration:

- The use of volunteers
- Opportunities for older people
- Provision by each local authority examining the reasons for any differences
- The Audit Commission report on sport and recreation
- Presentations on the reports on PE and sport in schools and on Health and Sport
- Community views.

Members were concerned about the proposed length of the review and agreed that it should extend to March 2003. They were also unclear about what the review was trying to achieve. The Chair said that the underlying theme was "seeking greater participation in sport" but he would arrange for a paper to be prepared during recess. This would also suggest the arrangements for a written consultation. It was suggested that Members should write to the Chair or secretariat about further ideas on the review.

Finally, in the light of the new research appointments due to be made during recess, it was agreed that an expert adviser for the review was not required.

## **Item 3: Forward Look**

Paper CC 15-02 (p3)

The Chair introduced the draft Forward Work Programme. The following points were made in discussion:

- Although members had agreed to concentrate on the Sports review, it was also felt important that work should begin on a review of Anglo Welsh culture. A presentation

was also called for on the impact of the current budget round on culture.

Some changes were also proposed:

- To move the discussion on the Millennium Stadium and on the National Museum's proposals for the display of art to 6 November and 23 October respectively.
- To bring forward discussion on the DCMS consultation on the Lottery to 23 October
- To move discussion on the Minister's response to "Our Language: Its Future" to 4 December
- To change item 2 on 18 December to Wales Arts International.

#### **Item 4: Minister's Report**

Paper CC 15-02 (p4)

The Committee welcomed the news of the £360,000 short term grant to the National Botanic Garden. In response to questions the Minister said:

- Part of the funds would be used for a marketing manager. The previous cut back in marketing activities had contributed to the drop in visitor numbers, although the foot and mouth crisis and poor weather had also been contributory factors.
- KPMG had been asked to report in the autumn at which time the long term future of the Garden would be assessed.
- Similar ventures, such as the Eden project would be looked at in case there were lessons to be learned for the future.

The Chair thanked the Minister and her officials and took the opportunity to declare his and Delyth Evans interest given the Garden was in their constituencies.

Other issues arising from the Minister's report were:

- The Minister announced that the ship found on the site for the Newport theatre was 25 metres long and possibly dated from the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Officials were working closely with the Arts Council, Newport BC and CADW on its future.
- The Minister congratulated Agenda Television, based in Llanelli, on their award of €500,000 from the EU MEDIA Plus scheme for an animated series entitled "Backpackers". It has been commissioned by RTE in Ireland and by S4C and will eventually be dubbed for transmission all over the world.
- The Chair reported on the visit of the judges for the European Capital of Culture competition. He felt that the visit to Cardiff had left the judges with a favourable

impression and that they had been surprised at the range of activities on offer.

- The forthcoming DCMS review of the Lottery presented a good opportunity to reconsider Wales' share of the funds and to explore the feasibility of having a single lottery distributor rather than the present five.
- The responses to the consultation on Resource were being analysed.
- In response to a question about provision in libraries for people with visual impairment, the Minister said that disability issues were a feature in Library Standards.
- The Minister also reported that she was consulting the Welsh Language Board on the report under the European Charter on Regional and Minority Languages.

## **Item 5: Welsh Film Festival in New York**

Paper CC 15-02 (p5)

Presenter: Chris Jones, Team Wales

Chris Jones explained that Team Wales is a small group of expatriates who organise events to raise the profile of Wales abroad. They have hosted the 'Spirit of Cardiff' sailing team in New York and supported the First Minister's team when they visited America for the St David's Day weekend.

The proposed film festival will take place towards the end of 2003. The Northern Ireland film festival proved to be a great success, as did the screening of 'Solomon and Gaenor' in New York.

The following points were raised in discussion:

- The content of the Festival is likely to be new works rather than be retrospective.
- The festival is designed not only to raise the profile of Welsh performing talent, but also to be a market place for Welsh films and an opportunity to develop partnerships and connections.
- Wales will be promoted as a location for films during the festival.
- Welsh animated films will be featured in recognition of the contribution Wales has made in this area, for instance the 'Superted' cartoon.
- Funds for the festival, approximately \$150 000, are expected to be raised through private sponsorship.
- There is no direct link to the opening of the Wales Office in New York. The festival is designed to be independent of any significant dates.
- American performers with Welsh connections will be invited to the festival, such as

Anthony Hopkins and Robin Williams.

- Team Wales are discussing how to draw in local film festivals with Sgrin.
- Dafydd Wigley would write to Team Wales about accessing databases of people with Welsh connections.

### **Item 6: Minutes of the last meeting**

Paper CC 14-02 (min)

Ratified with one change. Item 4 last bullet point, instead of 'establishing an industrial arts forum' insert ' establishing a creative industries forum'. Chair wished to note that the subject of Task and Finish groups had been brought to Business Committee's attention and the matter would also be raised in the Panel of Chairs.

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### **Committee Secretariat July 2002**