

23rd April 2024

Chair of the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee

Dear Delyth Jewell,

I am writing in consideration of the role of the Books Council of Wales/Cyngor Llyfrau Cymru within the current publishing industry and the creative writing frameworks of Wales.

Parthian and the Library of Wales publishing project has been fortunate to have had the support, both financial and practical through business development of the BC team. We have been able to utilise the opportunities afforded by the grant allocation schemes available through the BC. These are openly and transparently administered through a panel scheme aided by what has been an extremely talented team of publishing development officers of a very high calibre over the years. In addition, we have always had effective and direct business relationships with the CEOs of the BC starting with inestimable Gwerfyl Pierce Jones, through Elwyn Jones and now Helgard Krause. Ms Krause has particularly brought acute UK and international publishing industry experience and challenge to the Welsh world.

At Parthian we have been able to discuss new ideas and applications, while through the annual review process, the challenges, future targets and current successes of publishing and Parthian. While when we have been unsuccessful in grant applications or programme proposals, I have always considered that the reasons have been communicated clearly and effectively. While when we have had serious challenges we have always been able to discuss these openly with the team at the BC.

Looking at the roll call of programmes there is a significant run of achievements in recent years. The BC team has been largely responsible for the revitalisation of the Welsh publishers' offer/stand at both the London book fair and the Frankfurt Bookfair. It has been instrumental and hugely supportive of the establishment of the Publishing Wales trade body which developed cross industry support in Wales for the first time. Other schemes of significance include the establishment and administration of the New Audience Fund which has diversified the publishing offer within Wales while managing the nation changing development of the offer and supply of books to all children in Wales. The team worked effectively and creatively to help manage the industry through the Covid 19 crisis.

These successes are in addition to managing the framework of publishing support which has both broadened and diversified the industry in recent years. It has also supported the development of our creative talents through the commission schemes for writers through professional publication contracts for more commercial titles.

We've always had good relations with the team in Aberystwyth and find the BC, supportive, creative, and necessary for the publishing industry in Wales

Dr Richard Lewis Davies

Richard R Davies
Publishing Director

