

Task and Finish Group on the future outlook for the media in Wales

Response from NWN Media

As a substantial newspaper group with obvious interest in engaging with our audience in the most effective fashion both commercially and in setting a serious Welsh news agenda, I feel it essential that our relevance and range is fully understood in the current debate on changes in the Welsh media.

With a three edition daily title dominating the market place in the most densely populated region of North Wales and with respected weeklies covering huge areas of North and mid Wales we are continually concerned that any impression of Trinity titles providing the only hard news platforms and forums of debate presents a skewed version of reality in Wales.

We are a group of titles who are extremely proud of our positive interaction with the communities we serve and our championing of the various causes that spring from their midst.

While we are as concerned as other companies with the challenges facing local media, we believe there is still a vibrant agenda-setting local media (print and online) in Wales and that the evidence for that is found in titles such as our own. We would feel confident that a reader's search for serious Welsh regional news in North East Wales and many other population centres in the North would begin an end with an NWN Media title – a position we feel is not presented before you in this climate of analysis that presupposes the dominance of England based newspaper groups across the Welsh map.

It could be argued that the North Wales was the area perhaps least receptive in the initial stages to Cardiff governance. Many areas within our publications footprint looked east – culturally, economically and socially to the North West but were no less Welsh for that? It is to the Welsh Government's credit that those initial fears that South Wales thinking would dominate every perceived need have largely vanished. The administration's determined steps to be inclusive at all levels coupled with the enthusiasm of our local members has resulted in an obvious embracing of devolved government in recent years where once there remained suspicion of Southern priorities.

We take our commitment to Wales extremely seriously. As the leading Welsh based family owned publisher we have and will continue to make substantial investments here. Our titles are printed here – in Wales and about Wales! We have formed a pioneering partnership with Glyndwr University in Wrexham to provide an NCTJ accredited course to train Welsh journalists to work in Wales. No one else is doing this at this level.

Our big news today is that we are now at the planning stage of offering the first course anywhere allowing journalism students to achieve their NCTJ qualifications though the medium of Welsh. This a first and has come about again through the pioneering partnership of a media group, an academic institution and the NCTJ working together to set a ground breaking vision in place.

Local independent ownership of NWN Media means that it provides the only true Welsh voice in the region. We compete with rival media in many of our marketing areas, and that is right and proper. However we do feel that as market leaders in many of those areas that we should be seen as such when analysis takes place and when commercial decisions are made.