

Minutes of the ninth meeting of the Implementation Committee of the Newsplan (Wales) Project held at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, at 11.00am on Wednesday 3 December 1997

PRESENT: Dr Lionel Madden (Chairman), John Rees Thomas, Gareth Haulfryn Williams, John Woods, Non Jenkins, Rhidian Griffiths, John Byford, Linda Tomos, John Turner, John Cosslett, Iwan Jones (Secretary)

1. Personal

Apologies had been received from Paul Reynolds of the University Library, Swansea.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 1997 and matters arising

i. The minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 1997 had been circulated and were accepted as a correct record.

ii. 'Second Paper Copy'

The Chairman confirmed that he would raise the matter of keeping a 'second paper copy' of Welsh newspapers at a meeting of the Society of Chief Librarians.

iii. Newsplan(Wales) on the Internet

Rhidian Griffiths confirmed that the Newsplan(Wales) database would be made available on the National Library of Wales web site once the Library had 'translated' it into a compatible format. It was understood that the LASAR data was already available on the web and that it was also planned to put on the web the data for the West Midlands and for Scotland.

iv. Western Mail of the Internet

John Cosslett confirmed that the Western Mail web site would soon be set up.

3. Minutes of the Working Party meeting held on 14 October 1997

i. Role of the Working Party

Although the lack of funds for microfilming meant that the Working Party could not fully carry out its original intention, which was mainly to coordinate cooperative microfilming, the meetings fulfilled an useful function as a forum for local authority libraries and others who supported Newsplan. The meeting had included discussion of arrangements following the Smethurst Report and the proposed bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

ii. Index to The Cambrian

The Working Party meeting had included a presentation on the automated index to The Cambrian, by Marilyn Jones of Swansea Public Library. Members of the Implementation Committee felt that there was a need to identify indexes that existed in various libraries since they could be extremely valuable.

iii. Support of LISC(Wales)

The Chairman of the Implementation Committee said that a recent meeting of LISC(Wales) had discussed Newsplan and had declared its

support. He intended to write again to the authorities which did not send representatives to the Working Party expressing LISC(W)'s support for its work.

iv. Implications of Smethurst Report

John Byford commented on the Smethurst Report's implications for the collecting policy of the British Library. Archival responsibility for Welsh and Scottish newspapers would lie with the National Libraries of Wales and Scotland, but in England the situation was more problematic. It was intended to arrange a seminar on the British Library's collecting policy in 1998.

4. Funding possibilities: Newsplan Bid for Heritage Lottery Funding.

John Byford described progress on the proposed bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. He explained that the Fund had approved a feasibility study and that Dr Dennis Griffiths, Chairman of the British Library Newspaper Library Consultative Committee and formerly Production Director of Express Group Newspapers, had been appointed to carry out the study and prepare the bid. It was intended that microfilming would be carried out to preservation standards over a five-year period at the British Library and the National Libraries of Wales and Scotland. The Newsplan regions had been asked to identify (a) priority newspapers of the period 1820-1950, (b) microfilming units in each region and (c) the number of microfilm readers that could be used in public libraries.

The scale of the bid might be as much as £20 million, but there was still a number of uncertainties, such as the final size of the bid, the standards to be applied, the cost per reel and the allocation of funds for difficult preparation work. Although the bid would be presented on behalf of the LINC Newsplan Panel, it was not certain which body would present it. Matching funding might be raised from the newspaper industry by the London Press Club and the Freedom Forum. John Cosslett emphasised that in seeking support it would be best to approach the Chairmen of newspaper companies on a personal level.

Iwan Jones confirmed that the National Library of Wales had supplied a list of newspapers to be filmed, based on the Newsplan (Wales) Report and grouped in priority 1 - 4. This amounted to over 12,000 reels of film. A list of main libraries and branch libraries in also been supplied, in accordance with the suggestion made by the Working Party that microfilm readers should be distributed on the basis of two per main library plus one per branch. This amounted to 104 readers for Wales.

John Byford said the proposals reflected the views of the Newsplan regions. It was likely that the project would be managed centrally by a new body, possibly with a cooperative or charitable status. The application would include provision for an Education Officer who would work in conjunction with the existing Newspapers in Schools scheme. The possibilities of digitisation would also be borne in mind.

In discussion a number of questions was raised concerning the bid. The issue of cost was difficult because it was essential to balance the interests of the various parties (including the copyright owners, the newspaper industry, the microfilming unit, the libraries who held the collections and libraries who wanted copies) and to demonstrate

that no one would benefit at the expense of other parties. In addition, the need to set a competitive unit cost for preparation and filming should be balanced with the need to maintain preservation standards.

Concern was expressed about the involvement of the local authority libraries. John Woods asked whether the purchase of prints by local libraries was considered as shared funding. Gareth Haulfryn Williams said local authorities needed additional money to buy film rather than equipment. Reader-printers were more useful than readers, but even they would not be much use if the local authorities had no money for filming. The proposal seemed to assume local libraries would give up bound volumes of newspapers for disbinding and filming without receiving anything in return, and this was unlikely to appeal locally.

It was agreed that the discussion needed to be carried further. The meeting agreed that the Chairman should send out a letter to libraries describing the developments, and explaining the implications to the libraries which held collection that needed to be filmed.

5. Any other business.

i. Third Newsplan Seminar

It was noted that the Third Newsplan Seminar would be held at Durham on 16-17 March 1998.

ii. Letter to Welsh Office

Ann Matheson, Chairman of the LINC Newsplan Panel, had written asking for support in principle for Newsplan to the Department of National Heritage, the Scottish Office and the Welsh Office. No reply had been received from the Welsh Office.

6. Date and place of next meeting.

The date and place of the next meeting was left to the officers, but would probably be held at the National Library of Wales in May or June 1998.

The meeting was followed by a short presentation by Gwyn Jenkins, Keeper of Manuscripts and Records, and Andrew B Misell, Research Officer, on Llyfr y Ganrif, a book on the history of the twentieth century in Wales, to be published by the National Library of Wales in 1999.