

Minutes of the meeting of the Newsplan (Wales) Implementation Committee, held at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, on Thursday 20 May 2004

Present: Gwyn Jenkins (Chairman), John Cosslett, John Turner, Simon Kellas, John Lauder, John Woods, Nigel Soane, Iwan Jones (Secretary)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Ed King.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2003 and matters arising

2.1 Minutes

The minutes had been circulated and were accepted as a correct record.

2.2 Approaching the Assembly and other publicity (2.3 and 4.3)

Swansea Library had arranged for stories about Newsplan to be included in the *South Wales Evening Post*. Bridgend Library had arranged for a story to be included in the *Glamorgan Gazette*. Further local publicity was encouraged. Publicity in the Welsh national press might be generated by linking it to the launch of a Newsplan (Wales) web-site with the involvement of the National Assembly or CyMAL.

2.3 Newspaper scanning (5.1)

It was understood that the British Library was beginning a new digitising project for British Newspapers 1800-1900 with possible funding from JISC and the American National Science Foundation. The newspaper titles were being selected from a long shortlist.

3. Minutes of the Working Party meeting held on 29 April 2004

The minutes of the last Working Party meeting had been distributed and were accepted. The Implementation Committee had asked the Working Party to consider its future work after the completion of the first phase of Newsplan. The Working Party had noted that about 15 of the 22 Welsh authorities actively supported its work, and that the representatives were often also responsible for local studies. Small authorities were hard-pressed for resources to support Newsplan, but the Working Party had succeeded in involving staff working with newspapers with the project and had maintained a flow of information to them. Its future work depended on a further phase of Newsplan. Consideration should be given to expanding the Implementation Committee if the Working Party did not continue.

John Woods explained that he represented Newsplan on the Society of Chief Librarians and that some 'practitioners' might usefully be brought on to the Implementation Committee to give more practical experience of work with newspapers. Others that might be more strongly represented on the Committee included academic libraries and archives. Academic libraries had not shown much initial interest in Newsplan but had purchased considerable microfilm (especially Bangor and Cardiff). Archives were no longer represented on the Committee. While

libraries collected newspapers but did not always wish to preserve them archives rarely collected but did wish to preserve.

It was agreed that the Working Party had performed a very useful role to date and it was agreed to write to the Chairman, Brynmor Jones, who had recently retired, to thank him for his work. No date had been set for another meeting of the Working Party and it was agreed to consider at the next meeting whether more representatives actively involved with newspapers in local libraries should be invited onto the Implementation Committee.

4. Report on Newsplan 2000 Progress

John Lauder distributed copies of an up-to-date report on progress on Newsplan 2000. Permission for extending the Project up to January 2005 had been granted, although production was good and work was on target to end by November 2004. Some problems with obscured gutters had been inevitable when permission to disbind newspapers was not granted. Partnership funding, which had been extremely problematic in the autumn of 2003, was now satisfactory, and the tender for microfilm reading equipment could take place as soon as the maximum amount had been secured. Over 20,000 reels of microfilm had now been produced, including over 4000 reels of Welsh titles. It had been agreed by the Newsplan UK and Ireland Panel that Newsplan 2000 should seek to set up Phase 2 of the Project and obtain further support from the HLF in addition to the £5 million granted of the original £16 million application. It was likely that Phase 2 would see a hybrid approach involving digitisation as well as microfilming, in order to attract shared funding, which was essential.

John Lauder and Simon Kellas were warmly thanked by the Committee for their work. John Lauder thanked Brian Dafis of the National Library of Wales for his support in coordinating Newsplan preparations in Wales, which he felt was the best of all Newsplan Regions.

5. Newsplan (Wales) survey of newspaper use

A report on the Newsplan (Wales) survey of newspaper use, carried out mainly by members of the Working Party during February and March 2004, was distributed. This was the second survey, carried out to comply with the conditions of HLF funding. By the closing date 254 completed questionnaires had been received from 13 authorities. The report compared the findings with those of the 2002 survey and those provisionally submitted by other Newsplan regions. Some of the more significant findings included:

- Many more users travel over 100 miles to read newspapers in Wales than in any other region.
- Use of the Internet to trace newspaper is still low (4%)
- Local newspapers are the most heavily used. Wales has the highest usage of 'regional' newspapers
- There has been a 50% increase in the use of newspapers over 100 year old
- There has been a considerable change in the formats of newspapers used: a 50% increase in the use of microfilm, a slight reduction in the use of paper copies, and an increase in the use of newspapers on-line and on CD-ROM

The Committee felt that the findings could be used to generate some publicity and it was agreed that Iwan Jones would contact Ed King to see whether a story could be set up in advance of the preparation of the complete UK findings in the autumn.

6. Newsplan (Wales) web-sites

Details of the possibilities of a Newsplan (Wales) web-site were circulated. Funding of up to £16,000 was likely from the Kathleen Cooks Foundation (£4,000) and CyMAL (£12,000). The web site would initially contain information on Welsh newspapers, Newsplan (Wales) minutes and reports, and links to other Newsplan web-sites. A searchable database of the Newsplan (Wales) Report would also be developed. The Committee agreed that the officers should move ahead to establish the web-site with the support of the National Library of Wales Automation Unit. This would initially involve building the web-site and transferring the data into an Access database for on-line use through ISYS 6. This would then be updated over a period of about 12 months. In future it was hoped that an on-line editing facility could be developed to allow local libraries to give information about the nature of newspaper titles and their circulation, and even to update the details of their own holdings.

Hosting of the web-site by the National Library of Wales would cost about £500 per annum and John Cosslett agreed to make enquiries to see whether the Western Mail would sponsor the site hosting.

7. Any other business

7.1. Microfilm reading equipment

John Woods said that he had contacted the 22 Welsh library authorities to review for the second time the distribution of microfilm equipment, and he presented to John Lauder copies of the new list, which now identified 25 reader-printers and 28 readers, reflecting a growing desire for reader-printers. This was in keeping with the formula of one reader-printer being equivalent to four readers. John Lauder explained that the tender would reflect the need for quality and durability in the equipment, and would also include provision for discounts on additional equipment purchased within 12 months of the initial order. He still hoped to meet all the requests for equipment that had been made by the Newsplan regions.

8. Date and place of next meeting

The National Library of Wales at 11.00 a.m. on Thursday 4 November 2004