

Minutes of the meeting of the Newsplan (Wales) Implementation Committee held at the Western Mail, Cardiff, at 11.00am on Thursday 25 May 2000

Present: Andrew Green (Chairman), Linda Tomos, John Turner, Nigel Soane, Edmund King, John Woods, Rhidian Griffiths, John Cosslett, Iwan Jones (Secretary)

1. Apologies and personal matters

The Chairman thanked John Cosslett and the Western Mail for their hospitality and welcomed Nigel Soane to his first meeting, representing academic libraries. Apologies had been received from Gareth Haulfryn Williams and John Rees Thomas.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 14 October 1999

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

2.2 Western Mail web site (para. 3.2)

John Cosslett was congratulated on www.totalwales.com which it was agreed was one of the most successful Welsh web sites.

2.3 Newsplan (Wales) Report on-line (para. 3.3)

Rhidian Griffiths said that the Library had not yet transferred the Newsplan (Wales) data onto the web.

2.4 Preserving paper copies of Welsh newspapers (para. 3.4, 3.6, 5.3)

As a result of the Smethurst Report on its collecting policy, the British Library had decided not to collect paper copies of Welsh and Scottish newspapers. This laid a greater responsibility on Welsh libraries. Although Welsh libraries collected local newspapers, they were not often able to fund their preservation. Archives were also interested in collecting and preserving newspapers. The National Library of Wales collected Welsh newspapers and encouraged others to preserve sets in addition, to ensure complete coverage.

The British Library wished to buy microfilm copies from the National Library of the titles which the Library filmed, but the National Library was able to microfilm only a fraction of current Welsh newspapers, and there was a need for more filming to extend the list of titles. For the moment, therefore, the BLNL was still collecting paper copies of Welsh newspapers. Improving the preservation of newspapers required increased funding. Ed King agreed to send a copy of the revised Mellon Microfilming Manual to the Secretary when it was ready.

2.5 Newspapers on the web

Linda Tomos asked about the preservation of newspapers on the web. John Cosslett explained that the web site usually included only material to which the newspaper itself had copyright, so that it did not include all the content of the paper copy. Ed King noted that there was a cost implication to the preservation of digital material, mainly in upgrading hardware and software. It was agreed that there was a need to

consider how to preserve electronic newspapers and their digital archives. Iwan Jones agreed to take on the preliminary work of identifying what was available.

2.6 Newspaper indexes (para. 3.5)

Andrew Green noted that indications were that a study of newspaper indexes, abstracts, or cuttings was not an Assembly priority.

2.7 Approaches to the Assembly (3.8)

The Chairman agreed to write a letter to Assembly Members and to Members of Parliament to explain how Newsplan would benefit all of Wales. It was suggested that the letter should be sent in particular to Simon Thomas, Cynog Dafis, Elin Jones, Tom Middlehurst, Alun Pugh, Huw Lewis and Owen John Thomas.

3. Minutes of the Working Party meeting held on 11 November 1999

3.1 List of priority newspapers for filming

HLF funding would allow the filming of about 40% of the original list of newspaper titles and a letter had been sent to participating libraries inviting them to indicate newspapers for which there was a particular demand. The Department of Printed Books of the National Library had received responses and was preparing the final shortlist of titles for filming.

3.2 LISC(W) Preservation Survey

There had been an excellent response to the preservation survey of library and archive collections in Wales commissioned by LISC(W), with a return rate of about 66%. The consultant, Jane Henderson, had now submitted the final draft report. Andrew Green said LISC(W) had welcomed the report, which would be published on the web. Implementation of the recommendations might be linked with structural developments in Wales to correspond with MLAC. Preservation might benefit from these developments and there was a need to press for early action on the recommendations of the report.

4. Report on the LINC Newsplan Panel meeting of 27 April 2000

4.1 Third Newsplan Conference

The Conference would be held at the Euston Plaza Hotel, London, on 19-20 March 2001 on the theme of *Local Newspapers in the New Millennium*.

4.2 Newsplan Development Plan

Ed King summarised discussion of the Newsplan development plan, which identified potential developments not included in the HLF-funded programme, including surveys of newspaper use and promoting the use of newspapers by librarians and in education.

4.3 The People's Heritage: Newspapers and Historical Research

A paper given to the LINC meeting by Dr Jane Secker described research on newspapers, which had been conducted in Wales. The findings indicated that historians often found local newspapers more important than national newspapers. Dr Secker's permission would be sought to distribute copies of the paper to the members of the Working Party.

5. Report on 'Newsplan 2000' and funding for Newsplan

Rhidian Griffiths outlined progress. Newsplan 2000 had been set up as a limited company to direct the Newsplan programme; John Byford, Ann Matheson and he were trustees of the company. The London Press Club's offer of accommodation had been withdrawn and accommodation would be provided by the British Library, which had also provided support to establish the company. The post of Newsplan Director had been advertised on a three-year contract. John Lauder, Head of the Scottish Newspaper Microfilming Unit, had been appointed and would start in June 2000. A Project Manager would be appointed to take charge of day-to-day work. The new Director's first task would be to raise partnership funding, and he would also develop specifications for microfilming so that the work could be put to tender within the European Community. The microfilming units at the British Library and the National Libraries of Wales and Scotland were working together to tender for the work as a consortium. Filming was unlikely to start before 2001. It had been agreed that HLF funding would last for three years from the start of filming, so it would not be affected by delay in starting work.

Ed King said that Peter Chapman of Newsquest, who was involved with Information North, had begun promoting Newsplan in the North within the Newsquest organisation. He urged members of the committee to keep local newspaper groups informed so that they could identify the need for sponsorship and plan to provide it. John Cosslett emphasised the importance of approaching companies at the highest level. Organisations such as the Newspaper Society and the Newspaper Proprietors' Association could be approached to confirm expressions of support which had already been made. Within Wales, managing directors of newspapers should be contacted rather than editors. Matched funding from the newspaper industry would be used to provide microfilm readers for local libraries (two per authority plus one per branch library) and a number of reader-printers for larger libraries.

Participating libraries would also provide matched funding and contributions made by members of the Working Party should be recorded. The National Library intended to support Newsplan by preparing newspapers for filming.

6. Any other business

6.1 Publicity for Newsplan

John Cosslett emphasised the importance of publicising each step taken. Nigel Soane said that Newsplan was seen by most of the library community as a worthy project on the borders of consciousness, and that it was now time to focus attention on it. The CWLIS and WLA networks could be used. John Woods suggested that a web site should give details of the newspapers being filmed. It was agreed that the Newsplan (Wales) seminar would best be arranged when there were definite things to be said.

6.3 The future and status of the Working Party

It was agreed to defer discussion and to include this as an agenda item at the next meeting.

7. Date and place of next meeting

11.00am on Wednesday 25 October 2000 at the University of Wales Bangor.