

Minutes of the meeting of the Newsplan (Wales) Implementation Committee, held at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, on Thursday 20 November 2003

Present: Gwyn Jenkins (Chairman), Gareth Haulfryn Williams, Nigel Soane, John Woods, Ed King, John Cosslett, John Turner, Iwan Jones (Secretary)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from John Lauder. Beverley Fletcher of the *Western Mail* had resigned from the Committee because of her departure from the newspaper.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 6 May 2003 and matters arising

2.1 Minutes

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

2.2 Newsplan (Wales) Report on-line (2.2)

It had been agreed to establish a Newsplan (Wales) web-site on which the Newsplan (Wales) Report would be kept up-to-date and on-line. The National Library of Wales had sought funds to establish the site and it was understood that a total of £4000 might be available from the Kathleen Cooks Fund. Iwan Jones had been in touch with Andrew Phillips and with Martin Harrison of V3FM, who had carried out the development of the LASER site. V3FM estimated the cost of developing a similar site for Wales at £7500, not including the development of a direct editing facility nor upgrading the data itself.

Ed King said that he would be glad to support a proposal for further funding from the BL through the Full Disclosure scheme. It was agreed that he and Iwan Jones should explore the possibilities with a view to making a proposal in the name of the Newsplan (Wales) Implementation Committee early in 2004. Further consideration should also be given to the sustainability of the site as regards hosting and editing the data. While the National Library could host the site, Culturenet Cymru or CyMAL might also support the work. The domain name www.newsplan.co.uk was owned by V3FM, who would charge £1050 per annum for hosting a site.

It was agreed that the site should be bilingual, but it was noted that there would be complications in editing and updating the database itself if that were to be bilingual. It was also felt that the site or the database should provide some descriptive information about the newspapers titles.

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

Stories about Newsplan had now appeared in the *Wrexham Leader* and *Wrexham Evening Leader*, the *Mold and Buckley Chronicle*, and the *Caernarfon and Denbigh Herald*. It was understood from Marilyn Jones that Swansea Libraries intended to use the bicentenary of *The Cambrian* (20th January 2004) to generate publicity. The Committee agreed that this might be an opportunity to involve Assembly members in supporting Newsplan but that Swansea should take the lead in this regard. Iwan Jones agreed to contact Peter Gaw or Marilyn Jones to note the Committee's support.

2.4 Newsplan survey of newspaper use (2.4)

It was a requirement of Heritage Lottery Funding that surveys of newspaper use should be carried out during implementation. The matter of carrying out the survey had been referred to

the Newsplan (Wales) Working Party which had successfully carried out the first survey, and the Working Party had agreed to take the matter on. Ed King had prepared a standard questionnaire available on the Newsplan Concord web-site and Iwan Jones said he would provide a Welsh translation and distribute copies to Working Party members in January for completion by April 2004.

2.5 Microfilm reading equipment (2.5)

It was noted that John Lauder had recently expressed confidence in being able to supply local libraries with all the microfilm reading equipment requested in the list compiled by John Woods, but that it was not known when the equipment would be bought or distributed.

2.6 Newspapers on-line and newspaper scanning (5.1)

Ed King described a new British Library project which aimed to digitise approximately one million pages of British Newspapers 1800-1900 over the period 2003-2006. The project was supported by JISC funding of up to £5 million. The text would be fully searchable and access would be free. The British Library had drawn up a 'long shortlist' of titles which included twelve from Wales. The National Library of Wales had suggested some titles and the Chairman noted that it would be good to have at least four Welsh titles to allow a geographical coverage of North and South, one Welsh-language title, and possibly some spread of political viewpoint.

John Woods noted that the number of Welsh authorities subscribing jointly for access to on-line newspapers had now risen from 18 to 20 of the 22 authorities.

3. Minutes of the Working Party meeting held on 30 October 2003

The minutes of the last Working Party meeting were distributed and accepted. It was noted that the Chairman of the Working Party, Brynmor Jones of Cardiff Library, would be retiring shortly, and that the Working Party would select his successor. It was agreed that the Working Party had performed a valuable function during the period of the implementation of Newsplan in giving information about the project and in generating enthusiasm for it. Once implementation was complete it was uncertain how much work there would be for the Working Party to do. Other regions of Newsplan often arranged committee meetings on the same day as those of their local history librarians. Culturenet Cymru had also sought to create a group of on-line network 'champions' representing individual authorities. Nigel Soane suggested that members of the higher education and further education sectors should also be invited to join the Working Party. It was agreed to refer the matter to the Working Party, asking it to consider how to continue its work in future and report back to the Implementation Committee.

4. Report on Newsplan 2000 Progress

Iwan Jones and Ed King reported on progress as relayed to recent meetings of the Newsplan 2000 Trustees and the UK and Ireland Newsplan Panel. Copies of a progress report prepared by John Lauder, Newsplan 2000 Director, were also distributed, together with a list of Welsh titles which had been filmed to date.

4.1 Filming schedule

Targets for filming had been set and the monthly totals were continuing to climb to new peaks. The operation was now working most effectively and was in full flow. It was hoped that the whole project would be completed by the time scheduled but there was still some work to do to make up for time lost, and a short extension to the project was possible.

The quality of the film was generally very good and any defects and errors that had been spotted had been rectified quickly. John McIntyre, Chairman of the Technical Advisory Group, had made recommendations regarding improvements to techniques of filming and handling volumes, particularly tightly bound volumes. Problems with obscure gutters could occur with tightly-bound newspapers whose owners were not prepared to permit disbinding. Transportation of newspapers and distribution of film was also proceeding successfully.

4.2 Shared funding and distribution of microfilm equipment

The raising of shared funding from the newspaper industry had been much slower and more difficult than had been expected, and the Newsplan 2000 Director's report noted that the situation continued to be extremely serious. It was reported that the Newsplan 2000 Chairman, Dr Ann Matheson, and the Project Director had worked extremely hard in contacting publishers and newspaper groups, requesting them to confirm their commitment to the Project and to contribute the expected funding by the time set by the HLF. They had also looked at alternative sources for funding as had been requested by the newspaper industry. It was understood that the main newspaper groups were all now expected to contribute the required second year funding by the date set and confirm their commitment to third year funding.

Funding from the newspaper industry would be used to purchase equipment and because of the delay in securing the required funding the contract for microfilm equipment had not yet been put out to tender. Newsplan 2000 wished to secure maximum funding and to set up one tender only for equipment.

5. Arrangements in Wales

All 22 Welsh local authorities were now claiming film and were thereby qualified to receive free equipment in addition. So far local and higher education libraries had ordered almost 6000 reels of film at greatly reduced cost, representing additional funding for Welsh libraries amounting to several hundred thousand pounds. Brian Dafis of the National Library of Wales was arranging the preparation and distribution of newspapers and film, as well as the additional work of coordinating a joint order for film and invoicing all the partners. He was commended for the efficiency of the operation.

6. Any other business

6.1 Retirement of Mrs Beti Jones

It was noted that Beti Jones of the National Library of Wales, who had been involved with Newsplan for many years and was the author of the Newsplan (Wales) Report, had recently retired from the Library. Iwan Jones had already written to her on behalf of the Working Party, thanking her for her work, and the Committee agreed to record the thanks of the Implementation Committee to her for her services to Newsplan.

6.2 Retirement of Mr Gareth Haulfryn Williams

Gareth Haulfryn Williams noted that he would be retiring from local government service at the end of November. He was thanked for his services to the Committee and it was agreed to invite the Society of County Archivists to nominate another person to represent the archival community in his place.

7. Date and Place of next meeting

11.00am on Thursday 13th May 2004 at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

PLEASE NOTE – DATE CHANGED TO THURSDAY 20th MAY 2004 (11.00 a.m.).