

Minutes of the third meeting of the Newsplan (Cymru) Working Party held at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, on Tuesday 30 April 1996

Present: Brynmor Jones (Chairman), Beti Jones, Pauline Morris, Kay Warren-Morgan, Rhidian Griffiths, Non Jenkins, Geoffrey Smith, David Shone, John Rees Thomas, Gordon Reid, Iwan Jones (Secretary)

1. Apologies and personal matters

Apologies for absence were received from Margaret A Griffiths (Bridgend), Susan Pugh (Newport), Eleri Jones (Gwynedd) and Paul R Reynolds (University of Wales Swansea). The Chairman welcomed to their first meeting Geoffrey Smith, Head of the British Library Newspaper Library, and John Rees Thomas of Anglesey.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 26 September 1995 and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting of 26 September 1995 had been circulated and were accepted as a correct record. There were no matters arising other than those listed on the agenda.

3. Review of progress, future plans and work in progress (based on the East Midlands Model Plan)

Geoff Smith outlined the overall progress of Newsplan. The Report phase had been completed with the launch of the last report - that of LASER (London and South East) on 25 April. All eleven regions were now taking forward Implementation. Those which had started earliest, such as the South West, which had completed its report in 1986, had progressed furthest. The Newsplan regions had welcomed the Model Five Year Plan developed by the East Midlands as a common approach to implementation and a clear way of setting out achievements and future priorities. Both the South West and the East Midlands had now submitted five-year plans covering all the authorities in the regions from which Geoff Smith had abstracted summary statistics.

Non Jenkins outlined information to hand on progress in Wales (yellow paper - circulated) which outlined projects which had been undertaken cooperatively at the National Library of Wales and elsewhere up to 1996. She noted the National Library's own priorities for filming but emphasised that the Library was able to change its own schedule to take advantage of cooperative filming with other libraries. Mrs Jenkins asked for any additional information or any corrections to the yellow paper to be sent to Mrs Beti Jones at the National Library so that it could be updated by the time of the next meeting.

The Chairman of the Newsplan (Cymru) Implementation Committee, Dr Lionel Madden, had written to the new library chiefs asking them to declare their commitment to Newsplan. Although the response so far had been poor the attendance of the representatives at the meeting was encouraging.

4. Report on the LINC Newsplan Panel meeting of 25 April 1996

Iwan Jones said the Panel gave a good opportunity to see how other regions were progressing. Scotland was fortunate to have a dedicated

Newspaper Microfilming Unit funded by the Mellon Project at the National Library of Scotland, but faced problems with local library funding. Ireland was now building a newspaper microfilming unit at the National Library of Ireland but had yet to secure funds for running costs. The National Library of Wales was only able to keep microfilming going on a pro tem basis while cooperative projects sustained it. The key to the success of Newsplan was adequate funding for local libraries. Local government reorganisation could threaten this.

It was also important to look for central funds to support Newsplan. Geoff Smith explained that the Newsplan Panel had supported the discussions being held through the Mellon Committee in exploring the possibilities of Lottery funding for Newsplan. The problems mainly concerned the mechanics of putting a bid together: the Lottery was unlikely to grant money to the Mellon Committee to act as a central agency, but might accept a bid from a consortium of libraries. It might be possible for the National Libraries to make a joint bid, or for a group of Welsh libraries to put a bid together. Some partnership funding was necessary.

5. Implications of local government reorganisation

The implications were only now becoming clear. In most cases uncertainty remained regarding the book funds and the money that could be allocated to Newsplan.

Swansea - Pauline Morris now represented Swansea City and County but had changed her role and might not continue as the Newsplan representative. Mrs Morris could only give an unofficial commitment to Newsplan. She hoped the county would give more concrete support in future and would try to persuade her colleagues in Neath and Port Talbot to support Newsplan also. They might be particularly interested in the Neath Guardian and the Port Talbot Guardian.

Rhondda Cynon Taff - Kay Warren-Morgan said that she was still involved with local studies and that Lynne Bryn Jones was now the support services chief. She was hopeful that the new county would identify a microfilming budget.

Flintshire - David Shone said Flintshire hoped to continue participating. He also felt that some missionary work could attract support from other parts of the old county of Clwyd.

Anglesey - John Rees Thomas said that the old Gwynedd had an active microfilming programme but had filmed no Anglesey papers, so that the new county started from a 'zero base'. He was confident that the joint library and archive service under Mrs Elspeth Mitcheson would be able to allocate funds of at least 1%.

Powys - Gordon Reid explained that Powys had seen comparatively little change. Although Powys itself had few complete runs of newspapers he was looking for cooperative ventures with others and hoped to meet the 1% target allocation.

Cardiff - Brynmor Jones said Cardiff would continue to contribute at least 1% although this represented less money than it had previously. From now on he would probably have to film in 'blocks of years' rather than in whole title runs, and hoped to do so in cooperation with the National Library of Wales. He would contact former

colleagues now in the Vale of Glamorgan authority in order to discuss cooperating in Newsplan, particularly in filming Barry newspapers. Cardiff itself was interested in newspapers which extended beyond its own authority boundaries.

It was understood that Newport (represented by Susan Pugh), Bridgend (represented by Margaret Griffiths) and Gwynedd would also continue to support Newsplan.

It was agreed that it would be premature at present to press for progress on five-year plans for the new authorities and that the most urgent task was to persuade more of the new authorities to become involved with Newsplan. This could be done at two levels: Working Party members could contact former colleagues in new authorities (particularly Conwy, Denbighshire, Wrexham, Neath and Port Talbot, the Vale of Glamorgan) to encourage their participation in Newsplan. In addition it was felt that a further approach to the library chiefs of the new authorities by the Newsplan Implementation Committee, asking them to consider their reference services, might prove helpful. The Secretary agreed to raise the matter with the Chairman, Dr Lionel Madden.

David Shone emphasised that the new authorities with their smaller funds would find cooperative ventures particularly valuable, especially when that could lead to additional outside funding.

6. Coordination and communication

John Rees Thomas felt it was important to keep on sending out the message about Newsplan so that people became more aware of it. It was agreed to ask the WRLS to send out details of the Newsplan (Cymru) Report to all the new authorities, so that each authority would be aware of it and be able to buy a copy.

Geoff Smith said he had agreed to make details of Newsplan available on the World Wide Web through the British Library Newspaper Library's home page. The National Library agreed to enquire as to the possibility of making information on Newsplan (Cymru) and the progress and priority reports available via the Library's site on the Internet.

7. Any other business

(1) Microfilming Standards

It was agreed to invite Colin Venus, Head of the National Library's Reprographic Unit, to give a short presentation after the next meeting of the Working Party, concentrating on Microfilming Standards, particularly with regard to bureau work. Geoff Smith noted that copies of Guidelines for Newspaper Microfilming, a useful publication describing microfilming standards, was available from the British Library Newspaper Library, price £5.00.

(2) Non Jenkins explained that the condition of newspapers could make it difficult for the National Library to give exact quotes for the filming of newspapers without seeing the originals and asked members of the Working Party to accept estimates of the cost in the first instance.

(3) Rhidian Griffiths said that the National Library of Wales had now transferred the Newsplan (Cymru) Report to an on-line database. He asked for any additions or corrections, and particularly any changed locations, to be sent to Mrs Beti Jones of the Department of Printed Books of the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion SY24 5AE.

8. Date and place of next meeting

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 24 September 1996 at the National Library of Wales. The meeting would be held slightly earlier in order to allow time for the talk by Colin Venus.