

CYNGOR TREF Y DRENEWYDD A LLANLLWCHAIARN

CYNLLUN IAITH GYMRAEG

a baratowyd dan Ddeddf yr iaith Gymraeg 1993



Newtown & Llanllwchaiarn Town Council

Welsh Language Scheme

prepared under the Welsh Language Act 1993

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A Language Scheme for Newtown & Llanllwchaiarn Town Council
prepared under the Welsh Language Act 1993

A. STATEMENT

Newtown and Llanllwchaiarn Town Council has adopted the principle that in the conduct of public business in Wales it will treat Welsh and English on a basis of equality. This scheme sets out how the Council will implement that principle in the provision of services to the public in Wales.

The Council recognises that members of the public can express their views and needs in their preferred language, that enabling them to use their preferred language is a matter of good practice rather than a concession and that the denial of that right could place members of the public at a real disadvantage. The Council will therefore offer the public the right to choose which language to use in dealings with the Council.

The Council aims:

- to enable everyone who receives or uses the Council's services or contributes to the democratic process to do so through the medium of Welsh or English, according to personal choice;
- to encourage the use of the Welsh language in the life of the area it serves;
- to encourage the use of the Welsh language by other public bodies which have dealings with the Council and to support and encourage the use of Welsh by organisations and businesses which provide services for the public in the area served by the Council.

The scheme received the approval of the Board under Section 14 (1) of the Act on

19 November 1998

B. INTRODUCTION TO NEWTOWN & LLANLLWCHAIARN TOWN COUNCIL

The Town Council was established in 1974 upon the demise of Newtown & Llanllwchaiarn Urban District Council. It serves the people of Newtown and Llanllwchaiarn living in an attractive part of the Severn Valley. The A483 trunk road and the Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth Railway run through the middle of the area served by the Council. Its area runs from beyond Coleg Powys/Mochdre Industrial Estate in the west to The Gro/Dyffryn Industrial Estate in the east. According to Powys County Council Welsh language Scheme, 14.01% of the population aged 3 or over are Welsh speakers.

The Town Council Offices are situated above the Robert Owen Museum at The Cross. The entrance is in Severn Street. The Town Council comprises 16 elected Members and employs 5 staff, all of whom are based at the Town Council Offices. The Town Clerk is the head of the Council paid staff.

The Town Council maintains its Grade II Listed Building offices and the Robert Owen Museum. It also maintains 4 play areas, a Multi sports and youth meeting area, an ancient disused Church and Churchyard containing the Tombs of Robert Owen and the Pryce - Jones family.

The Town Council, with the aid of local business, provides an extensive display of Christmas lights, generally regarded as the best in mid Wales.

The Town Council regularly receives applications for financial and other support towards the activities of local groups. The Town Council invites applicants, if they wish, to include in their applications, how they might reflect the bilingual nature of the area. This is a matter for applicants to consider, and not as a requirement of the award of a grant.

C. WELSH LANGUAGE SCHEME

1. SERVICE PLANNING AND DELIVERY

1.1 New Policies and Initiatives

1.1.1 The Council will assess the linguistic implications of any new policies or initiatives when formulating them.

1.1.2 New policies and initiatives will facilitate the use of Welsh wherever possible and will move the Council closer to implementing the principle of equality fully at every opportunity.

1.1.3 Any new policies and initiatives will be consistent with the scheme.

1.1.4 The Welsh Language Board will be consulted in advance regarding proposals which will affect the scheme or will affect the schemes of other organisations. The scheme will not be altered without the Board's agreement.

1.1.5 Those involved in policy formulation will be aware of the scheme, and of the Council's responsibilities under the Welsh Language Act 1993.

1.1.6 The measures contained in the scheme will be applied to new policies and initiatives when they are implemented.

1.2 Delivery of Services

1.2.1 The Council will aim to ensure that all aspects of its service to the public in Wales will be available through the medium of Welsh by:

- adopting procedures which will enable the provision of services in the language chosen by the service users;

1.2.2 The measures set out in the scheme will apply to all the services delivered by the Council to the public.

1.2.3 Members of staff will be fully aware of the requirements of the scheme and the Town Clerk will be responsible for ensuring that all the requirements are reflected in the work carried out by the Council's staff.

1.3 Standards of Quality

1.3.1 Services provided in English and Welsh will be of an equally high standard. The Council will ensure that it provides a consistent standard of service in Welsh in all areas of its work.

1.3.2 Information concerning the Council's commitment to providing an equally high standard of service in both languages will be stated in documents such as the Town Guide.

1.3.3 Service delivery in both languages will comply with the existing commitment to standard as specified in the Citizen's Charter.

1.3.4 The standards applied to Welsh language services and their implementation will be monitored on a regular basis.

2. DEALING WITH THE WELSH-SPEAKING PUBLIC

2.1 Written Communication

2.1.1 The Council will welcome correspondence in either English or Welsh.

2.1.2 Correspondence through the medium of Welsh should not of itself lead to any delay.

2.1.3 All correspondence with the Council requiring a reply will receive a signed reply in the language of the original letter.

2.1.4 All correspondence following a telephone or face-to-face conversation in Welsh will be in Welsh unless the member of the public has indicated otherwise.

2.1.5 Correspondence ensuing from a meeting where it has been established that the person's preferred language is Welsh, although the meeting may not have been held through the medium of Welsh, will be in Welsh.

2.1.6 All correspondence with a member of the public will be initiated in his/her preferred language if known. If it is not known initial correspondence from the Council will be English.

2.1.7 All circular or standard letters to the public will be in bilingual.

2.1.8 The Council's official note paper will include a statement in both languages making it clear that correspondence in both languages is available.

2.1.9 Until such time as the Council has at least one member of staff who is capable of producing high quality written and verbal communication in Welsh, the Council will contract the services of a translator as and when required. The Council's translator will have responsibility for the quality of written Welsh correspondence produced by the Council.

2.1.10 The translator will be responsible for organising the translation of correspondence.

2.2. Telephone Communication

2.2.1 The Council welcomes telephone enquiries in Welsh or English.

2.2.2 All external calls will be greeted in bilingual.

2.2.3 Those answering the telephone will be able to deal with calls in both languages. Until that is achieved, non-Welsh speaking staff will explain their position courteously and offer to transfer the caller to a Welsh speaker. If no Welsh speaker is available, the person receiving the call will take the caller's name and number and will ensure that a Welsh speaker returns the call as soon as practicable.

2.2.4 Guidelines on correct procedure will be issued to appropriate members of staff.

2.3 Public Meetings

2.3.1 Contributions will be welcome in English or Welsh at public meetings organised by or on behalf of the Council. This will be made clear in the literature convening or publicising the meeting.

2.3.2 Translation facilities will be provided by the Council, at all public meetings organised by or on behalf of the Council, where the Town Clerk has been informed three days beforehand, that this will be required and the facilities are available.

2.3.3 Simultaneous translation equipment will be provided in the Council Chamber, where the Town Clerk has been informed, three days beforehand, that it will be required and the equipment is available.

2.3.4 All publicity for public meetings will itself be bilingual.

2.3.5 All written information used at a meeting, such as O H P slides, leaflets or captions, will be bilingual.

2.4 Other Pre-arranged Meetings with the Public

2.4.1 The Council will welcome meetings with the public in either English or Welsh.

2.4.2 Employees coming into contact with members of the public should be able to work in both languages. Until this is achieved, non-Welsh speaking staff will explain their position courteously and offer to involve a Welsh speaker. If no Welsh speaker is available the person will be invited to discuss the matter in English, or offered the alternative of being contacted by a Welsh speaker as soon as practicable.

2.4.3 Meetings on Council premises: If the preferred language of the person is known to be Welsh, the Council will seek to ensure that the person is met by a bilingual person.

2.5 Other Dealings with the Public

The Council does not at present have contact with the public through the computerised media, but should this be the case in the future then that contact will comply with the measures set out under Written Communication.

3. THE COUNCIL'S PUBLIC FACE

3.1 Corporate Identity

3.1.1 The Council's name is Cyngor Tref Drenewydd a Llanllwchaiarn (*and*) Newtown & Llanllwchaiarn Town Council

3.1.2 The Council will adopt a fully bilingual corporate identity.

3.1.3 The Council's name will appear in both languages on all external and internal signs in all areas, on publications, and on motor vehicles and buildings owned by the Council.

3.1.4 All official letter headings, fax paper and compliment slips will be bilingual.

3.2 Signs

3.2.1 All new information signs or those replacing previous signs on Council property, including internal areas to which members of the public have access, will be bilingual.

3.2.2 The size, quality, legibility and prominence of text on signs will respect the principle of equality.

3.2.3 If separate signs are used for the two languages, they will appear together and be equal in terms of format, size, quality, legibility and prominence.

3.2.4 When the Council is consulted about public information signs it will support the principle that signs be fully bilingual.

3.2.5 When the Council is consulted about names for new roads, streets or developments, it will support the principle that locally inspired names in Welsh format be used. Where a difference between Welsh and English versions of a name is merely spelling, the Council will support the adoption of the Welsh form.

3.3. Published and Printed Material

3.3.1 All publications aimed at the public in Wales will normally be bilingual with both language versions forming one document. The versions will be printed side by side to facilitate easy cross-reference.

3.3.2 When Welsh and English versions are published separately they will be issued simultaneously, distributed together and they will be equally accessible and the selling price will be the same.

3.3.3 All Agenda and Minutes of Council and Committee meetings will be produced in English. Versions in Welsh will be provided if requested and at least three days notice is given.

3.3.4 Reports and other background information may be produced in English or Welsh or bilingually.

3.3.5 Text produced in English only or in Welsh only will be translated if a request is received from a member of the public for a version in the other language.

3.3.6 All documents for publication and translation will be proof-read by the translator.

3.3.7 Any other type of printed material, whether on paper or any other material, e.g. invitations, posters, cards, maps etc., will be in English unless it is known that a recipient's preferred language is Welsh or this is contrary to any other provision of this scheme. The full bilingual corporate identity of the Town Council will be included and the title of the event will also be given bilingually.

3.3.8 The Welsh Language Board's Guide to Bilingual Design will be made available to those involved with publications.

3.4 Forms and explanatory material

3.4.1 All forms and explanatory material published by the Council for use by the public in Wales will be in English except where it is known that the recipients preferred language is Welsh or a bilingual version is requested..

3.4.2 Written guidance on the correct procedures will be issued to staff involved in designing and producing forms.

3.5 Press Releases

3.5.1 All press and media releases will be prepared in the usual language of the recipient publication.

3.5.2 All releases will include a statement to the effect that arrangements can be made for Welsh language interviews, provided at least three days notice is given.

3.6 Advertising and Publicity Activities

3.6.1 Advertising and publicity activities will be conducted bilingually in a way which treats both languages on a basis of equality.

3.6.2 All publicity material will be bilingual or prepared separately in both languages.

3.6.3 Any marketing or advertising campaigns carried out by or on behalf of the Council via the Press, television, radio, etc. will be fully bilingual.

3.6.4 Promotional literature prepared for the tourist market will be bilingual or prepared separately in both languages.

3.6.5 Posters and information signs will be bilingual.

3.6.6 Any public surveys carried out by the Council will be bilingual along with any response mechanisms linked to campaigns to promote information.

3.6.7 Any public exhibitions staged by or on behalf of the Council will be bilingual.

3.7 Official notices, public notices and staff recruitment advertising.

3.7.1 Advertisements and notices in the press, on notice boards or on any other medium will appear bilingually, except as provided elsewhere in this scheme.

3.7.2 Advertisements for jobs for which Welsh is essential will be in Welsh only, in all publications, with an explanatory sentence in English in English/bilingual publications.

3.7.3 If no suitably qualified Welsh speaker applies for such a post it will be re-advertised in English containing a statement that any appointee will be required to learn Welsh (see 4.3.3.)

3.7.4 Advertisements for all other jobs will be bilingual in English/bilingual publications and in Welsh only in Welsh language publications.

3.7.5 Written guidance on the correct procedures will be issued to staff involved in advertising.

4. IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING THE SCHEME

4.1 Staffing

4.1.1 There will be a review of staff skills to establish the distribution of Welsh speakers, and to identify the posts where the ability to work through the medium of Welsh is deemed desirable or essential. Future job descriptions will be drawn up accordingly.

4.1.2 The desired distribution of Welsh speakers will then be achieved through staff training and future recruitment thus implementing the staffing strategy.

4.1.3 The maintenance of the desired level of Welsh speaking staff will be monitored regularly.

4.2 Learning Welsh

4.2.1 Members of staff who deal with the public will be encouraged to attend appropriate Welsh courses locally. No-one will be required to do so.

4.2.2 Learners will be encouraged to apply for recognised qualifications such as NVQ's.

4.2.3 Staff learning Welsh will be encouraged to use their Welsh in the workplace.

4.2.4 Copies of appropriate publications will be provided in the office.

4.3 Recruitment

4.3.1 Linguistic ability will be one of a number of skills considered in staff appointments. Where the ability to work through the medium of Welsh is considered essential or desirable for any post, this will be specified when recruiting to that post.

4.3.2 In a situation where two candidates for a post where Welsh is desirable have equal qualifications and experience, the level of skills in bilingualism may guide the final decision.

4.3.3 Should it be necessary to appoint a non-Welsh speaking individual for a post for which Welsh is deemed essential, a condition of employment will be to learn the language to the required level within an agreed period and with the support of the Council.

4.3.4 Publicity will be given to the fact that Welsh speakers are welcome to join the workforce by ensuring that all job advertisements appear bilingually and that the information is transmitted to the Job Centre when relevant.

4.4. Administrative Arrangements.

4.4.1 This scheme has the full support of the Council and the Town Clerk.

4.4.2 The responsibility for implementing the Scheme within the Council will rest with the Town Clerk, who will:

- ensure that guidelines and instructions are available to all staff involved in the implementation of the scheme;
- monitor the implementation of the scheme;
- provide an annual report on implementation to the Welsh Language Board.

4.4.3 The Council will ensure that all members of staff are made aware of the implications of the scheme by providing detailed guidelines on implementation.

4.4.4 Specifications for new, replacement or adapting computer programmes will enable the Council to implement the commitments in the scheme, where appropriate.

4.5 The Translation Service

4.5.1 The written translation needs of the Council will be the responsibility of the translator who will also be responsible for the quality of all Welsh text produced.

4.5.2 The Council's translator will be a suitably qualified person able to produce a high quality service.

4.5.3 If the translator is not able to complete the work in the time required, another external professional translator will be employed.

4.5.4 The Town Clerk will have responsibility for arranging simultaneous translating facilities for all the Council's requirements. This service will be available when requested, at all meetings of the Council and at public meetings arranged by or on behalf of the Council.

4.6 Monitoring

4.6.1 The implementation of the scheme will be monitored.

4.6.2 Responsibility for monitoring will rest with the Town Clerk who will provide a report annually to the Welsh Language Board.

4.6.3 The following items will be included in the monitoring process:

- * forward planning:
ensuring that new policies, or new publications and computer programmes, will be in keeping with the delivery of bilingual services on a basis of equality.
- * delivering services:
the implementation of arrangements made to deliver the Council's services in Welsh, and their effectiveness.
- * dealing with the Welsh speaking public:
 - response times for Welsh correspondence;
 - the implementation of the measures on telephone communication;
 - the quality and use of simultaneous translation services;
 - the arrangements for public meetings;
 - the bilingual atmosphere of the workplace to which the public has access.
- * the Council's public face:
 - implementation of the Council's corporate image;

- the introduction of bilingual publications, forms, signs, notices and other published material.

- * staffing:
the extent to which the desired level of Welsh-speaking staff is being achieved.
- * timetable:
achievement against the scheme's timetable.
- * grievances:
the number and nature of complaints received relating to the Council's service in the Welsh language and suggestions for improvements.

4.6.4 All publicity concerning the scheme will state the name of the person to whom complaints concerning its implementation should be made. All complaints received will be acknowledged in writing, recorded and dealt with as appropriate.

4.6.5 The Council will encourage and welcome suggestions from the staff and the public for improvements to any aspects of the scheme. All suggestions received will be acknowledged in writing.

4.6.6 All members of staff will receive a description of correct procedures for the implementation of the scheme.

4.7 Targets against which implementation can be monitored.

The implementation of the scheme will be measured against the timetable provided. The existing commitment to standard and promptness in dealing with the Council's business will be maintained from the outset.

4.8 Publishing Information

Reports on the implementation of the scheme will be published annually. These will involve matters such as:

- * time taken to respond to correspondence in Welsh:
- * percentage of publications produced bilingually:
- * percentage of press statements published bilingually:
- * performance in meeting deadlines for processing applications made in Welsh
- * number of Welsh speakers in the workplace compared with target set.

4.9 Publicity

Information concerning the scheme will be provided for the public in bilingual leaflets distributed from the Council's offices and other appropriate centres. The publicity material will confirm that the Council offers a full service through the medium of Welsh.

4.10 Timetable

4.10.1 The Town Clerk will review the existing situation regarding the provision of services in accordance with this scheme, and identify the areas which need attention. The Town Council will need to allocate new funds with regard to the services of a translator and equipment; staff attendance on Welsh language courses as appropriate; additional translation work undertaken and the improvement and development of bilingual design and publication.

4.10.2 The Town Council will begin implementing the scheme (in a formal sense) from the date of its approval by the Welsh Language Board with a view to its being fully operational by 1st September 1998.

Any comments, complaints or suggestions regarding the scheme should be directed to:

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