

Culture Committee – CC-7-02(p.4)

Date: 17th April 2002

Time: 9.00am-12.00pm

Venue: Committee Room 1

REPORT OF THE MINISTER FOR CULTURE, SPORT AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE

Visit to the Basque Country

I visited the Basque Country between 9th and 12th April, along with the Chairman of the Welsh Language Board. The purpose of the trip was to find out more about the work being undertaken to support the Basque language and to examine and draw comparisons between linguistic policies in the Basque Country and Wales.

The visit gave us an opportunity to consider the main strategies adopted by the Basques in revitalizing the use of the Basque language, how the language is promoted and its use planned within various sectors, and how the Basques have normalised the use of the language within the Public Administration. The delegation also visited a local council to assess how language use is planned at a community level, and had discussions with HABE, the organisation responsible for teaching Basque to adults.

I will provide an oral report to the Committee on the outcome of the visit.

Task & Finish Group on Publishing

I have now accepted the report of the Task & Finish Group on Publishing and have agreed its recommendations. I am writing to members separately about the work of the Task & Finish Group and enclosing a copy of the Group's final report.

I am extremely grateful to Delyth for her hard work in chairing this group, and would like to thank all those who contributed to developing a report, which has the broad support of the publishing sector. The group has taken a strategic look at the publishing industry in Wales, and has made a number of recommendations, which I believe will help the industry to develop and flourish. I am pleased to announce that we have already managed to implement some of the recommendations, which mean that the Welsh Books Council will benefit from simplified

funding arrangements in future.

TWF

Last month saw the official launch of TWF, the extension of the language transfer within families scheme, over 9 areas in Wales. Each has a field worker responsible for offering guidance and support to parents and parents to be on the benefits of passing on the Welsh language to their children. This community initiative is receiving over £0.5m through the Welsh Language Board's grant in aid over the 3 year period 2001/02- 2003/04. This aspect of the Board's work is essential in securing the future of the Welsh language.

People's ICT Network

I launched a new all-Wales People's Network leaflet on 8 March, when I spoke at the Welsh Libraries Conference in Llandrindod Wells. The leaflet was funded by the Welsh Assembly Government and produced by the Wales People's Network Task Group, a sub-group of my Library and information Services Council. The leaflet has been designed to help public library services advertise the free ICT services they now have on offer, it is aimed at existing and potential users, and colourful and clear. I hope to follow the leaflet up with some further modest but well-targeted marketing items later in the year.

National Botanic Garden of Wales

My officials continue to consider details of the Business plan with the Garden and other funding partners including the Millennium Commission, the WDA, WTB and Carmarthenshire County Council. I am due to meet Alan Hayward, Chairman of the Gardens, again in May to discuss progress.

Ryder Cup 2010

Good progress is being made both in terms of establishing the company to deliver the bid commitments - I expect the company to be formally established in May- and in meeting the bid commitments and using the event to promote Wales. Arrangements for the "Wales Summer of Golf" 6 major tournaments are well advanced, the Wales Tourist Board have let a contract in respect of developing a golf tourism strategy, the Sports Council for Wales continue to work to develop Welsh golf and together the Sports Council and the Tourist Board are working up joint proposals for European funding to help develop the Welsh golf product. The value of the Ryder Cup in terms of international profile was reflected in the very successful media briefing held in New York as part of the First Minister's "Wales in New York" weekend in March.

Sports Cabinet

I have arranged for the Sports Cabinet, a meeting of all 4 home country sports ministers, to be held in Cardiff for the first time on 18 June.

National Lottery

I welcome the recent announcement of a UK wide review of lottery funding and will be meeting the Secretary of State for Culture and my Devolved Administration colleagues shortly to discuss how best to ensure Wales' interests are fully represented in the review. Amongst the issues I will be raising will be the Welsh Assembly Government's commitment to "ensure all lottery streams have a distinctive Welsh direction", the need to review the percentage share of lottery proceeds to Arts and Sports in Wales and the calls that Assembly colleagues have made for a system of "one stop advice shops" in respect of lottery funding.

Camelot will shortly be re-launching the lottery in an attempt to increase ticket sales and therefore the amount of funds available to good causes. I will be participating in the Welsh re-launch (15 April). In terms of levels of funding I was pleased to see that my concerns, and those of the lottery distributors in Wales, in respect of the impact of the Gambling review have been listened to. The UK government in announcing its plans for reforming the regulation of gambling has announced that it will not allow side betting on lottery numbers nor will it remove limits on other national lotteries both of which might have had a significant impact on lottery income.

Outdoor Activities Awareness Forum

On 18 March I launched the Outdoor Activities Awareness Forum at Storey Arms, Brecon. I presented a written plenary statement on the aims of the Forum on 21 March. The Forum will consider how best to raise public awareness of the potential risks involved when engaging in outdoor activities and of the importance of considering taking appropriate safety measures. I expect to receive a preliminary report from the Forum by the end of May.

Football Forum

The Forum has held four meetings throughout Wales and I attended the last meeting in Swansea. The Forum will present their strategy to help improve the development of football for young people in Wales by the end of May.

Island Games

Ynys Mon/Isle of Anglesey County Council is considering submitting a bid to host the Island Games in 2009. The games are a bi-annual event, which attract over 5,000 sportsmen and

women, who compete in a variety of events. I have met with delegates from the Council, and I am considering their request for funding for a feasibility study which will identify what levels of support are required and if any upgrade of facilities are necessary.

Capital of Culture

Cardiff's bid has been sent to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. They will now consider and draw up a shortlist of selected cities by autumn 2002, with a final decision by the Prime Minister being announced in 2003, following a recommendation from the Advisory Panel currently being established.

Wales Millennium Centre

Work on site started on 25 February and is progressing well.

Culture Strategy

There will be a regional launch of my Culture Strategy at Oriel Mostyn in Llandudno on 19 April where I will have the opportunity of discussing with those involved in the arts in North Wales the issues that are important to them, and how my Culture Strategy can assist.

L'Orient Festival

I visited Paris in March for the launch of the L'Orient Festival, which is featuring Wales this year. I attended the L'Orient Interceltique Festival Concert and hosted a luncheon.

The Festival taking place in August is the biggest Celtic music and arts festival attracting over 500,000 visitors each year. This year Wales is the featured nation and we are looking at ways in which we can support the Welsh artists and groups who will be featured during the course of the festival.

VISITS 27 FEBRUARY 2002 – 16 APRIL 2002

February

Attended performance of Coppelia c/o Ballet Russe Sherman Theatre

Attended BBC National Orchestra Concert St David's Hall

Attended Rugby Wales v Italy Millennium Stadium

March

Address Launch of WLB 'Twf' The Bay

Address Launch of Arts Training Wales Llandudno

Visit Robert Owen Memorial Museum Newtown

Address launch of 'Now Let's Make Music' Cardiff

Attend UWIC's Arts & Culture Dinner Cardiff

Visit Rhondda Fach Sports Centre Rhondda

Visit Basketball Session with Rhondda Rebels Porth

Key Note Address at Welsh Libraries Conference Llandrindod Wells

Attend 'To Kill a Mocking Bird': Clwyd Theatr New Theatre

Cymru

Attend Family Literacy Group for World Book Day Cardiff Library

Attend Lorient Interceltique Festival Concert and Paris

Host Luncheon

Visit Swansea Institute Swansea

Launch 1st Meeting of Outdoor Activities Storey Arms

Awareness Forum

Attend Concert, Cardiff University Choir St David's Hall

And Orchestra

Address CHNTO's Skills Development Event Cardiff

Attend 'Rosencrantz & Guildenstern are Dead': New Theatre

Clwyd Theatr Cymru and address reception

Visit Cywaith Cymru Artworks Butetown

April

4 day visit to the Basque Country Spain

Art & Business Video Interview Launch Milling Area

Launch of WMC 'Stage for a Nation' St David's Hotel & Spa

Address Re-launch of Camelot Millennium Stadium