

<b>MEETING:</b>	LANGUAGE COMMITTEE
<b>DATE:</b>	24 April 2023
<b>TITLE:</b>	Update on the work of Hunaniaith - Gwynedd's Language Initiative
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<b>PURPOSE OF THE REPORT</b>	This report is submitted in order to provide a background to Committee members about the existing work and priorities of the initiative.

## **1. Background**

1.1 The primary purpose of Hunaniaith, Gwynedd's Language Initiative, is to increase opportunities for people to use the Welsh language in all aspects of their lives and in all communities in Gwynedd. This report takes a retrospective look at the past year and presents examples of the officers' work in order to improve Members' understanding of the type of interventions that are planned across the various fields.

1.1.1 Hunaniaith's new Chief Officer started in post in May 2022, following the Cabinet's decision in 2021 to fund a Chief Officer post for the language initiative "to focus on attracting new grants and generating an income, improving community contact, attracting more community members to the Strategic Group, and working towards being an independent entity." The post is funded for 4 years from 2021.

## **2. Overview of 2022-2023 work**

2.1 Following the different period of Covid 19, 2022-2023 saw us returning to a more normal programme of face-to-face events and activities, but due to popularity amongst our service users, some digital/virtual aspects continue.

2.2. Most of our work focuses on Theme 2 of the Cymraeg 2050 strategy, namely 'Increasing the Use of the Welsh language'. Our work with the public is split into three specific fields, namely Children and Young People, Families and Community. In part 3 of this report, a taste of some of the main schemes which occurred in 2022-23 within the three fields is given.

2.3 We need to attract more volunteers to take action for the Welsh language in our communities across the county, therefore we are not simply aiming to 'hold' or 'arrange' events, rather plan events and interventions which will inspire people, so that we are able to empower and support communities and individuals to take action themselves as well.

- 2.4 A 'Lead Group' of new volunteers was appointed in summer 2022 to lead on moving the Language Initiative to become an entity independent of the local authority; more information and a proposed timeframe is provided in part 4 of this report.
- 2.5 We succeeded to attract additional funding during the year, £22,000 from various funds which increased our capacity to offer more activities and generate income which will support us as Hunaniaith evolves over the next year.

### **3. Specific projects**

#### **3.1 Families**

**3.1.2 Libraries-** We worked with the county's libraries department to arrange a 'Sesiwn Teulu - Amser Stori a Cherdd' tour, led by the Cyswllt Sain company, in four libraries across the county (Bala, Bethesda, Porthmadog, Blaenau Ffestiniog)

**3.1.3 Llanbedrog-** By working jointly with a local group 'Llanbedrog Playing Fields Committee', a carols service was arranged at Oriol Plas Glyn y Weddw which included learners singing Welsh carols, the local school taking part and all contributions in Welsh. Also in Llanbedrog and by working with the local committee, a 'Disgo Dwynwen' was held with nearly 50 children and 25 parents attending.

**3.1.4 Immersion Centres-** By developing our partnership with the education department, we have started to reach out to new families who send their children to the immersion centres in order to create a system of support for the entire family, not just the pupil, with the aim of this resulting in those families coming closer to the Welsh language and using it. This support started during 2022-23 through digital presentations every term to parents, presentations about the history of the language, the current situation, where to go for support and where to use it locally.

**3.1.5 Ffestiniog-** 'Wenglish' Sessions - in the Ffestiniog area, doing things that don't have a focus on the Welsh language, but through the medium of Welsh. 'Wenglish' rather than Welsh, to attract and promote families to use what Welsh they have without any expectations for anyone to be perfect or fluent etc., is the aim of these sessions. We had sessions of laughter and telling jokes, play sessions in the park and keep fit sessions, meeting in different places such as a local farm, local café etc.

**3.1.6 Bangor-** We worked with MSparc 'Ar y lôn' in Bangor to offer arts workshops to families leading up to the Christmas and Saint David's Day celebrations in the city.

#### **3.2 Children and Young People**

**3.2.1 Digital-** Digitally, we take advantage of the opportunities that come about from bringing the county's schools, immersion centres and families together - when the children are at home, to do activities in Welsh, and the following was offered:

- Cwis Dim Clem 2023 (Language Initiatives' national quiz)- for the county's schools - 15 schools and 226 pupils from Gwynedd took part, with Ysgol Cefn Coch, Penrhyndeudraeth coming third in Wales!
- Science sessions with 'Sbarduno' company during the school holidays, four sessions in total with two of these arranged specifically for pupils of the immersion centres - 36 children took part
- Kahoot quizzes shared with the schools, and families to do at home, to coincide with events such as Santes Dwynwen, Dydd Miwsig Cymru and Saint David's Day.
- The north Wales Language Initiatives' monthly video games club

3.2.2 **World Cup**- use the tournament to create a buzz about the Welsh language, examples of the work are as follows:

- The Language Initiatives' national competition to design a Bucket Hat through the schools and for families to do at home- 51 schools and 1,358 applications from Gwynedd
- Mural of Ethan Ampadu, Wales player, and a gig by Elidir Glyn at Ysgol Dyffryn Nantlle with children from Ysgol Bro Lleu also attending

3.2.3 **Summer of Fun**- we were a part of a national application by the Language Initiatives to Welsh Governments' Summer of Fun fund, and we succeeded to attract £12,500 which was spent on activities for children and young people during the summer, 23 events were arranged with 341 children attending the events. Events were arranged in Bangor, Bethesda, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Bala, Penygroes, Penrhyndeudraeth, Llanbedrog, Dinas Dinlle and Nefyn. Some of the events arranged were:

Climbing	Paddle-boarding	Bushcraft
Discos	Performance	Mountaineering

A day of fun for refugees from Ukraine at Gwersyll yr Urdd Glan Llyn

3.2.4 **Community Schemes for children and young people:** With face-to-face activities, we aim to fill gaps and trial and develop community schemes which have the possibility of continuing in the long-term without our support. During this period:

- Llwyfan Llŷn continued (theatre club in Sarn, Pen Llŷn). We have given less financial support to this activity by gradually withdrawing and asking parents to contribute more to the sessions for children and young people, we aim for this activity to stand on its own two feet by the second half of 23-24.
- Forest School, Llangywer - responding to local demand for outdoor activities through the medium of Welsh, again trialling in the first place by offering it free of charge, aiming to develop with parents paying during 23-24. Sessions such as identifying plants, building a den, starting fires etc.
- Theatr Derek Williams, Bala - arts sessions in Penllyn to trial the demand for such activities more regularly

3.2.5 **Influencing:** Through our work, we try to influence events and organisations which have not done much in Welsh in the past. This is in order to try to influence their use of the language and for them to offer activities in Welsh to children in the future, and in so doing increasing the use and 'normalise the Welsh language' especially in our areas which have lower percentages of Welsh-speakers. In this period, we did the following:

- Snowdonia Donkeys Charity, Dyffryn Ogwen - develop and support them to offer activities in Welsh for children with disabilities

- Academi Westend Academy, Bangor- support the theatre school to take part in the Bangor Saint David's Day activities with the academy singing songs in Welsh for the first time ever

**3.2.6 Schools and the Education Department-** We work with schools and the education department and during this period the following was undertaken:

- "Consultation" event with 16 pupils from year 8 of four secondary schools from Meirionnydd in Glan Llyn, and opportunity for us to learn what is important to them, what their language customs are and what these children would like to see in Welsh, in and out of school. The information gathered will be a basis for our planning and funding applications in the next year
- Outdoor activities, facilitated by the Urdd, for year 8 pupils of Tryfan and Friars secondary schools in Bangor- bringing confident and less confident speakers together in the open air to try and influence language use

### 3.3 Community

Through our community work we seek to empower individuals and communities to take the lead and organise local things in Welsh, as well as organise events that draw communities together, raise prestige and awareness and show what is possible, in this period the following happened:

- 3.3.1 St David's Day celebration events, Bangor city-** Menter Iaith Bangor started these celebrations some years ago, now led by a group comprising the city council with a number of partners, with the language initiative playing a key role. Events include a parade and arts presentations that bring everyone together and introduce the Welsh language to a new audience.
- 3.3.2 Regular Sessions for Learners-** Paned a Moidyr (Bangor), Clwb Sgwrsio (Trawsfynydd), Clwb Siarad (Groeslon)- regular sessions for learners- events that are supported by us, but are also dependent on volunteers and can take place without staff members attending, which is the ideal we aim for with learner sessions, and other activities, across the county.
- 3.3.3 Running Club, Bangor-** a light jogging exercise club every two weeks with the emphasis on enjoying and talking rather than running fast
- 3.3.4 Walks for Learners-** Our walks for learners remain hugely popular, and while there is a feeling that this is heavy in terms of staff time, there is clear feedback from learners that these are thoroughly enjoyed and vital to add to their classroom learning experience and to get to understand and feel part of their local communities. We aim to develop these with more volunteer leaders in the future. In this period there were 8 tours in various areas including: Porthmadog, Llanystumdwy, Bangor, Bethesda and Nefyn.

- 3.3.5 **Support for golf clubs-** Through our support, and together, Nefyn and Abersoch golf clubs now organise Welsh language entertainment evenings, in this period there were evenings with John ac Alun, Dylan Morris and Annette Bryn Parry. The clubs are now seeing the benefits of Welsh language events and are keen to do more, this of course following our initial support and intervention. Abersoch Golf Club, due to Hunaniaith's intervention, has registered as a performance venue with the Night Out scheme.
- 3.3.6 **Advice-** Initial advice and guidance was given to a new group who have come together in Llanuwchllyn to try and buy the local pub to establish it as a Welsh Community Enterprise, from this leadership the group was successful in a grant application to the Cwmpas fund.

#### 4. The future

Hunaniaith has developed and evolved over the past year, and this will accelerate during 2023-24.

##### 4.1 Transferring to being an independent entity-

4.1.2 **Registering the Company and Opening a bank account-** Led by our group of 11 volunteers we aim to register a not-for-profit company and open a bank account in spring 2023, the new entity will be called Menter Iaith Gwynedd. This will be done sooner rather than later to attract more volunteers and be able to pursue additional funding.

4.1.3 **Launch-** We will have a 'soft launch' at the Eisteddfod, declaring to the world that 'Menter Iaith Gwynedd' is on the way and we will be running a campaign for people to join us to make a difference in their communities.

4.1.4 **Employed Officers-** Staff will remain employed by Cyngor Gwynedd during 23-24, officially changing to be employed by the new independent entity on 1 April 2024

4.1.5 **Funding Strategy and Business Plan-** we are currently developing these. Additional funding was attracted from Welsh Government, Cyngor Gwynedd's Economy department and Cyngor Gwynedd's Youth department during 2022-23. We will be aiming for lottery and Arfor2 funds during 23-24, as well as identifying commercial gaps the revamped Language Initiative can consider filling by offering commercial services.

##### 4.2 Priorities for 23-24

4.2.1 **Priority Areas-** We will support communities across the county, but we will focus some of our work in the Penllyn, Pen Llŷn, Bangor, Dyffryn Ogwen and Felinheli areas, this following the results of the 2021 census and due to the visit of the National Eisteddfod.

4.2.2 **Priority Audiences-** Children and young people, and getting Welsh-speaking children to use the language, is a priority.

4.2.3 **Partnerships**- strengthening our involvement with community organisations, agencies and groups is essential. We will continue to be part of the new 'Gwynedd Community Initiatives' network, strengthen our involvement with voluntary groups and make the most of the National Eisteddfod visit by working in partnership with them on several schemes, including leading on creating a linguistic legacy for the Eisteddfod visit beyond August.

## **5. Recommendation**

It is recommended that the committee accept and note the report.