



**MINUTES OF THE FIRST ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF WEA CYMRU**

Held on Saturday 29 March 2014 in Llanelli Town Hall

Present: Prof. Teresa Rees (former President, WEA South Wales - in the Chair), Maggi Dawson (Chief Executive Officer), Stephen Thomas (Clerk to the Council).

Individual Members: Shazia Akhtar, Dave Ashman, Mark Baines, Amanda Bennett, Jasmine Choudhury, Simon Conlin, Jessica Cromie, Steve David, Nigel Davies, Cllr. Ray Davies, Viv Davies, Cath Dawkes, Joe England, Tudur Evans, James Fleming, Christine Franks, Christopher Franks, Christina Gallagher, Nomitha Gallagher, Tracy Garnett, Jeremy Gass, Alison Ghrairi, Louise Gilmore, Jonathan Goddard, Lynne Hayes, Adrian Heathfield, Alan Heneberry, Cath Hicks, Nicola Holmes, Galiya Idrisova, Jayne Ireland, Mark Jenkins, Sarah Jenkins, June Jeremy, Eleanor Ann Jones, Helen Mary Jones, Sonia Jones, Val Jones, Sue Leslie, Claire Lewis, Wendy Lewis, Rhian Liddiard, Hazel Maguire, Clive Morgan, Suzanne Morris, Jayne Murphy, Sarah Murphy, Ray Neil, Tim Owen, Jon Parry, Graham Price, Ann Reardon James, Martyn Reed, Sonia Reynolds, Donna Ridler, Michael Samuel, Leane Saunders, Toni Schiavone, Karina Scott, Katrina Taylor, Nick Taylor, Byron Thomas, Prof. John Thomason, Jan Tiley, Elaine Topping, Kim Vidal, Stuart White, Heather Wilbourne, Caron Williams, Ceri Williams, Sian Williams (71).

Branch Representatives: Cathrine Clark (Blackwood and Oakdale), Jenni Jones-Annetts, David MacManus, Marilyn Thomas (Caerphilly), Jane Carter, Phil Elias, Ken Owen, Caroline Streek (Llanelli), Janet Bailey (Llangynidr), Ceinwen Statter, Huw Williams (Merthyr), Iris Beadman (Perthcelyn), Gerwyn Davies, Graham D Morris (Port Talbot), Derek Edwards (Unit 10, Port Talbot), Nicola Williamson (Vale) (16).

Affiliated Organisation representative: David Evans – Co-operative Group.

Speaker and Visitors: Sir Deian Hopkin, Cllr. Terry Davies (Chairman, Carmarthenshire County Council), various representatives of Llanelli Town and Llanelli Rural Councils, and numerous members of Llanelli WEA branch. **Auditor:** Huw Baker, Btp Associates Ltd.

Apologies: Megan Adams, Rufus Adams, Ifor Baines, Alan Balcombe, Terry Bishop, Christine Butler, Nicola Campbell, Catherine David, Andrea Davies, Gail Davies, Isabella de la Croix, Mashmooma Din, Laurence Donovan-Warks, Philip Eddy, G J Edwards, Annie Evans, Gwilym T Evans, Karen Fisher, Michael Gallagher, Katrina Gass, Adele Gatt, Jackie Gilderdale, David Girdler, Jeff Greenidge, Clive Griffiths, George Austin Griffiths, Elaine Gwynne, Peter Gwynne, Jacqueline Hatherall, Judith Tipney Hicks, Alison Hill, Rowena Hooper, Elizabeth Hughes, Rob Humphreys, John Hurley, Lynette Hurley, Mark Isherwood (YMCA Wales CC), Pamela Ismail, Gerry Jenson, Emrys Wyn Jones, Lynda Jones, Sue Keen, Christopher Kidd, A Marilyn Lewis, Matthew Lloyd, Meirion Lloyd Owen, Betty Mason, Richard Morgan, Gareth Morris, Stanley Morris, Rhian Ostler, Valmai Owen, Robin Charles Owens, Lisa Parkhouse, Heather Pickford, Tracey Powell, William Powell AM, Michaela Prior, Sharon Reader, Deanne Rebane, Anne Rees, Dafydd Rhys, Vicky Roderick, Jenny Sheen, Cllr. Ken Stevens, David Cameron Stewart, Derek Thomas, Hywel Thomas, David West, Judith Wilding, Delia Williams, Huw Williams (Pwllheli).

Item	ANNUAL CONFERENCE
1.	<p>Welcome and Greetings</p> <p>Prof. Teresa Rees opened the meeting, welcoming everyone to a historic gathering of the unified national body and the first Annual General Meeting of the newly formed WEA Cymru. She apologised on behalf of Rob Humphreys, Chair of the organisation, for his unavoidable absence, and introduced Cllr. Terry Davies, Chairman of Carmarthenshire County Council, who expressed warm greetings to all on their visit to the town and to the county.</p>
2.	<p>Keynote speech</p> <p>Sir Deian Hopkin, President of the National Library of Wales and Llanelli WEA branch member, spoke on <i>'The challenges and opportunities facing adult education'</i>. He reflected on aspects of the Association's past while also pointing to the themes of audience, communication and delivery, and funding as being major issues for the future, all linked to campaigning activity by WEA Cymru. Members raised a number of questions from the Floor in the discussion session which followed his presentation.</p>
3.	<p>Workshops Session: WEA Cymru's Aims and Objectives</p> <p>Conference delegates were then divided between four separate workshop groups, each facilitated and recorded by members of staff. The four groups tackled points relating to the new national body's strategy, and in particular provided input to the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who should be our strategic partners? - How should we use our new national status? - What should be our relations with WEAs elsewhere? <p>Maggi Dawson co-ordinated feedback, led by rapporteurs from the four groups, in a brief plenary session that followed.</p>
4.	<p>Siân Thomason Awards</p> <p>Three awards were made for outstanding achievements by WEA Cymru learners over the past year, in memory of former staff colleague Siân Thomason. Her father, Prof John Thomason, presented certificates to the winners and underlined the centrality of adult education to such students.</p>
5.	<p>Llanelli WEA Branch Centenary celebration</p> <p>Ken Owen, Branch Chairman, informed delegates of the highlights of the branch's current work and its plans for marking one hundred years of activity with a distinguished year-long programme of events. Some of the output from the Branch's classes was on display in the hall for delegates to see.</p>

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2014	
6.	<p>Approval of minutes of the previous AGM</p> <p>The minutes of the Annual General Meeting of WEA South Wales, held at Ystradgynlais Welfare Hall on 23 March 2013, were considered. They were approved (proposed: Viv Davies; seconded: Janet Bailey), with one abstention, subject to the addition of June Jeremy's name to those present, the correction of Marilyn Thomas and Annette Alexander's names in the same category, and the addition of Adrian Heathfield to the list of apologies.</p>
7.	<p>Presentation of the 2012-2013 Annual Report and Accounts for WEA South Wales</p> <p>Copies of the full Annual Report and Accounts were available to all members at the meeting, in English and in Welsh. In the absence of a chairperson of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, Mark Baines (Director of Finance, WEA Cymru) provided an overview of the accounts for the year ending 31 July 2013. This final full year in the name of WEA South Wales showed a healthy overall position, with an annual surplus and significant accumulated reserves, on which to base the subsequent merger with Coleg Harlech WEA North Wales. He mentioned that the accounts had received unqualified approval from the external auditors, and expressed his thanks to colleagues for their work in ensuring the financial probity of the organisation.</p> <p>Huw Baker (on behalf of auditors Btp Associates Ltd.) echoed the comments about the sound position represented by the balance sheet, referred to the auditors' report on page 20, and wished the national organisation well in its new form.</p> <p>The AGM duly received the Annual Report and Accounts as presented, and authorised the re-appointment of Btp Associates Ltd. as WEA Cymru's auditors for the 2013-14 financial year (both resolutions proposed: Jenni Jones-Annetts; seconded: Joe England).</p>
8.	<p>Chief Executive Officer's Report on the year's work</p> <p>Maggi Dawson provided a visual and verbal presentation of the activities of the organisation during 2013-14, concentrating on the exciting prospects for the unified and enlarged body, including new project work and extended activities. She described the broadening of educational provision, and gave a statistical analysis of WEA Cymru's funding and its range of learners and courses. She thanked the governors and members of staff who had assisted in making the merger happen, the Welsh Government for facilitating such a move, and learners for their continuing commitment to the organisation.</p>
9.	<p>Former Chairs' Reports</p> <p>Jeremy Gass summarised his activities as WEA South Wales's chairman up to the official merger date of 10 January 2014, referring to research work,</p>

Proposed: Chris Franks (on behalf of the Council); seconded: Caroline Streek.

The motion was carried unanimously: **In Favour: 74**
Against: 0
Abstention: 0

Motion 3

This AGM welcomes the statement of values contained in the document 'About WEA Cymru' – Showing Respect, Being Learner Focused and Flexible, Working Collaboratively, Providing Value for Money, and Practising Democracy – and the vision outlined by our Chair (Rob Humphreys) at the press launch in January 2014. The AGM looks forward to seeing how these values are implemented in WEA Cymru's strategy and practice.

Proposed: Jeremy Gass (on behalf of the Council); seconded: Viv Davies.

It was explained that the Chair's vision entailed a broad curriculum, including the humanities, reflecting subjects beyond merely those that were accredited.

The motion was carried unanimously: **In Favour: 77**
Against: 0
Abstention: 0

Motion 4

This AGM notes that divisions in society are being exacerbated by elements of both the media and the UK government. Accordingly, we call for WEA Cymru to organise activities that tackle ignorance and prejudice, develop understanding and tolerance of difference, and promote social justice.

Proposed: Jeremy Gass (in an individual capacity); seconded: David MacManus.

This engendered the greatest debate among the motions. While some thought that it described the essence of adult education, there was also discussion as to whether such work was really part of WEA Cymru's role.

The motion was carried: **In Favour: 76**
Against: 1
Abstention: 0

Motion 5

This AGM recognises the serious challenges facing the Welsh education system and the considerable potential role that adult education can play in helping overcome these. We call on Council and senior management to engage with the Welsh Government in policy development and implementation to address these challenges.

Proposed: Viv Davies; seconded: Huw Williams.

The recent PISA educational scores for Wales provided the context for contributors on this matter.

The motion was carried unanimously: **In Favour: 77**
Against: 0
Abstention: 0

11. **Results of elections to governors on WEA Cymru's Council**

There was a sequence of announcements made concerning the new elected governors on WEA Cymru's Council (governing body). Firstly, a set of five Regional Forums had met the previous month and each had elected a governor to represent it on Council, as follows:

North West – **Toni Schiavone**

North East, Powys and Ceredigion – **Nigel Davies**

South West – **Derek Edwards**

South Wales Central – **Graham Price**

South East – **Cathrine Clark**

Two Learner representative governors' seats existed on the new Council. There had been no nomination from north Wales for its seat, so in accordance with the constitution the Council would now ensure the filling of that vacancy. A nomination came from the Floor for the south Wales Learner representative – **David MacManus**. He was unanimously elected by those learners at the meeting (11) eligible to vote in that election.

Two Staff representative seats existed on the new Council, and two nominees had come forward – **Dave Ashman** to represent the teaching staff, and **June Jeremy** as representative of the business support/administrative staff. These were endorsed by the AGM.

One Branch representative seat existed on the new Council. **Phil Elias** (Llanelli branch) was nominated from the Floor, and proceeded to introduce himself and his reasons for standing. He was unanimously elected by representatives using votes on behalf of their branches at the meeting (17).

Finally, one Council seat represented Individual Members, Affiliated Organisations and Learner Forums combined. There had been three nominations for this, and hence a postal ballot had been held among those eligible to vote. The voting period had closed at the commencement of the AGM, and scrutineers had verified the votes cast either by post, or in person earlier in the day. They were as follows:

Jenni Jones-Annetts 30

Mashmooma Din 22

Elaine Gwynne 8

Jenni Jones-Annetts was duly confirmed as the Council member for that representative seat.

Prof. Teresa Rees closed the AGM by thanking those who had ensured that the day had run smoothly, and reiterating the importance of adult education as an empowering force.