

Fforwm Rhanbarthol Gogledd Orllewin / North West Regional Forum

WEA Cymru
17th February 2014

Opening

The regular meeting of the Fforwm Rhanbarthol Gogledd Orllewin / North West Regional Forum was called to order at 1:30pm on 17th February 2014 in Antur Waunfawr by Dafydd Rhys.

Present

Dafydd Rhys (DR)	Democracy Manager
Huw Williams (HW)	Llŷn Branch Member
Marilyn Lewis (ML)	Llŷn Branch Member
Vivien Allen (VA)	Colwyn Bay Branch Member
Llinos Hicks (LH)	Conwy Denbigh Development Worker
Buddug Williams (BW)	Bangor & Mon Development Worker
Tudur Evans (TE)	Workplace Learning Manager
Ceri Lewis (CL)	Workplace Development Worker
Julie Roberts (JR)	Notes / Business Support
Siôn Aled (SA)	Translator

Apologies

Toni Schiavone
Annie O'Brien
Iolo Penri
Rhys Roberts
Siôn Jones

Minutes of Last Meeting

There were no minutes of previous meeting.

1. Croeso / Welcome

Dafydd Rhys (DR) welcomed attendees to the meeting and thanked translator, Siôn Aled, who made it possible for the meeting to be conducted bilingually.

2. Ethol Cadeirydd / Elect Chairperson

It was agreed that election of a Chairperson would be held until the next meeting. The Chairperson would be responsible for chairing the North West Regional Forum meeting 3 times per year.

3. Democratiaeth Newydd WEA Cymru / WEA Cymru's New Democracy

- a. DR explained the new democracy would be a new start for WEA Cymru but building on foundations from the past. The original WEA was founded over a century ago in 1913. In the early days there would have been a branch in every village.

Under the new Constitution individual members and affiliated organisations can attend Regional Forums along with representatives from Branches and Learner Forums. With the power to elect over 50% of Governors democratic accountability in the North will be stronger than before.

A timetable of events has been set up and the current membership campaign will hopefully generate more activity. Meetings will be held this week in all 5 regions throughout Wales and each of the areas will elect representatives to the National Council. The North West Region is one of the largest areas, with a learner population of around 5,000. Branch meetings and learner forums along with the Regional Forums will feed into the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Llanelli on 29th March, which is celebrating its centenary this year.

- b. Concern was raised by Huw Williams (HW) about the storage and accessibility of minutes and historical WEA documents and where they would be held, now that WEA Cymru was an 'All Wales' organisation. It was suggested that the best option would be to give them to local archive departments to digitize them. This would ensure ideas stay local and the history not lost. It could also be a resource available for the public to view.

VA enquired about the whereabouts of previous minutes from the Colwyn Bay Branch which had been sent to Bangor. It was understood that from there they were sent on to Harlech.

Action: JR check with Iona Jones if minutes still held in Harlech.

- c. Concern was also raised by HW that meetings may be centralized towards the south now that we are an all Wales body. DR confirmed that meetings would be rotated within the areas concerned to ensure everyone is treated fairly.

4. Gweithgaredd y Rhanbarth a Chynlluniau / Provison and Plans for the Region

Staff members representing each of the areas within the North West Region gave a brief outline of what was currently happening in their areas.

5. Ethol Aelod Rhanbarthol I'r Cyngor / Election of Regional Member of the Council

The North West Region can elect one member to represent them on the National Council. TS had presented his nomination for the North West Council Seat but was unable to attend the meeting due to other commitments. He did however submit a statement which DR read to the meeting highlighting

decades of involvement with education including tutoring for the WEA and heading the Welsh Skills Council.

DR explained the voting system and that some attendees are entitled to two votes if they attend as both an individual member and also an elected representative. Members voted on TS being elected as the North West Region representative. The result was 7 votes for and 1 against.

Clarification was asked on how the Board is made up which was given by DR.

6. Gweithgaredd Rhanbarthol / Regional Activity

DR handed over to the area representatives to give a brief update of what was happening in their areas:-

- a. TE – Workplace – currently covering the 6 northern counties working with people who are low paid, employers, small businesses and in particular Trades Unions.
- b. CL – Dyfodol Project - working with businesses and the self-employed. Aiming to run new and exciting courses which are a little different than other providers are offering.
- c. LH – Conwy / Denbigh area is currently running courses such as IT, Photography, Art and Welsh. They often work with agencies and other partner organizations. There are also some vocational courses running in the Rhyl area but are currently struggling to find Welsh speaking tutors.
- d. BW – Bangor and Môn area run a similar range to Conwy/Denbigh such as IT and Crafts and also work with young people through football clubs etc.
- e. JR – Harlech currently runs a Social Studies / Access to Nursing University of Wales Foundation course and also short courses such as IT, Spanish, Pilates and a Community Choir. It is planned to hold Welsh and Digital Art Summer Schools in July.

Development for the Future

It was agreed that the first step should be to find out what people would like and need now we are establishing new Branches. Both HW and RH were keen to re-establish traditional courses but it is also recognized that it can be difficult to recruit learners with other providers also offering courses. Education has improved over the years, which has affected the original purpose of the WEA. We need to offer courses with a difference that other providers are not offering e.g. Local History.

VA felt that the volume of paperwork involved to run courses creates a barrier for tutors.

The development of issues discussed today is dependent on the regions creating a strong voice to ensure that available funding is distributed appropriately.

The hope is to recruit new branches and members and encourage more volunteering and informal classes. Branches run independently, organizing their own activities. They have their own constitution, membership and bank account. New branches may be able to access funding support to help with set up costs.

TE is working on creating an 'e-branch' to enable members to put ideas forward and to contact each other.

DR mentioned that there was interest in establishing new branches in Caernarfon and Blaenau Ffestiniog and that there was an on-going discussion to revitalize Cangen Llŷn.

It was suggested that Rhuddlan may be a suitable place for a branch being situated between Denbigh and Colwyn Bay.

The Colwyn Bay Branch has declined over the years but they are due to re-convene on 2nd April. VA will write to let members know.

LH suggested that learner forums would be easier to set up first, then hopefully could lead on to branches once established. Many people are busy and not willing to give up their time but learner forums could fit in with a course by having a dedicated session included.

DR noted how indebted we are for the many hours of experience and time which people have given over the years.

7. Amser a Lleoliad Fforwm Nesaf / Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held at 1.30pm on Monday 12th May at Glasdir, Llanrwst, LL26 0DF.

8. UFA / AOB