

**MINUTES OF SOUTH WEST REGIONAL FORUM**  
**Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2014, 1.30pm**  
**Aberavon Rugby Club, Manor Street, Port Talbot**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Action</b>
	<p><b>Present:</b></p> <p><i>Staff:</i> Elaine Topping, Eleanor Jones, Ray Neil, Dafydd Rhys, Martyn Reed (minutes),  <i>Regional Forum Rep on Council:</i> Derek Edwards  <i>Branch Rep on Council:</i> Phil Elias  <i>Branch Reps:</i> G.D.Morris (Port Talbot), Gerwyn Davies (Port Talbot), Ken Owen (Llanelli), Jane Carter (Llanelli), Caroline Streek (Llanelli)  <i>Affiliated Organisation member:</i>  <i>Individual Members:</i> S.K. David, Sonia Reynolds  <i>Learners:</i> Wendy Budd  <i>Learner Translator:</i> Sion Aled Owen</p> <p>Apologies: None received</p>	
	<p><b>Agenda</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Welcome</li> <li>2. Minutes of previous meeting</li> <li>3. Matters arising</li> <li>4. Statement from regional representative to the WEA Council</li> <li>5. Matters arising from WEA Cymru Council minutes</li> <li>6. Regional matters</li> <li>7. Development of Voluntary Movement</li> <li>8. Date of next meeting</li> <li>9. Any other business</li> </ol>	

1	<p><b>WELCOME</b></p> <p>Gerwyn Davies welcomed those gathered to Aberavon Rugby Club which is the venue for Port Talbot branch lectures.</p> <p>Dafydd Rhys opened the meeting by explaining that there will be the possibility of people having multiple votes based on their status as either individual members, branch representatives or local forum representatives.</p>	
2	<p><b>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING</b></p> <p>Ken Owen (KO) nominated Sonia Reynolds (SR) as Chair; there were no objections.</p> <p>KO recommendation: There should be an addendum to the previous minutes to state why we have appointed members to the council; specifically why we have got 9 appointed members.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> ET to provide the addendum item and forward to Dafydd Rhys (DR) The minutes were approved as amended above.</p>	Elaine Topping
3	<p><b>MATTERS ARISING</b></p> <p>SD asked if there was any way constitutionally that council members could be invited to attend at a regional forum. DR stated that constitutionally the council is meant to circulate around Wales and meet at regional forums. A regional forum should therefore be able to invite a council member to attend.</p> <p>KO stated that the constitution specifies that council members should attend a regional forum once every two years. SD stated that Dafydd had made it clear that any council member could be invited where there was relevance to the meeting. To date Phil Elias (PE) has attended all regional forums as an elected branch representative on Council.</p> <p>KO asked who had appointed the chairman of WEA Cymru. With no response from the floor, KO stated that Welsh Government had appointed the chairman, which challenges our democratic status. DR referred back to the PowerPoint slide which outlined the organisational structure. A proportion of representation from both North and South were appointed to the shadow board.</p> <p>SR Stated that it would be normal practice for representatives from both sides to be appointed to a shadow board.</p>	

	Alwyn Rowlands has resigned as a representative for Coleg Harlech and this position has been advertised in the press.	
4	<p><b>STATEMENT FROM REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE TO THE COUNCIL</b></p> <p>Derek Edwards (DE) reported back as the representative for the SW regional forum. DE has attended one AGM meeting and would like to attend more groups to meet the members. DE stated that he has also visited the YMCA for an informal meeting.</p>	
5	<p><b>MATTERS ARISING FROM WEA CYMRU COUNCIL MINUTES</b></p> <p>The question was asked: “Will we receive WEA Cymru Council minutes?” DR stated that the clerk to council has indicated that he wants to make the minutes available as soon as possible.</p> <p>Concerning Regional Forum minutes DR explained that there had been recommendations in other forums that the minutes should be circulated to those present for initial approval before being posted on the WEA Cymru website.</p> <p>KO stated that he accounts for the North were not ready for the council to see pre-merger. KO went on to ask if the accounts for the North have been sorted out? SR believed that this would have been a closed discussion and would not have been publicised. SD proposed that Mark Baines be invited to the next regional forum to provide an answer to the deficit issue. DR explained that it was his understanding that CHWEAN were in a reasonably stable financial situation going forward into merger. <b>ACTION:</b> DR to request that Mark Baines attends the next meeting.</p>	Dafydd Rhys
6	<p><b>REGIONAL MATTERS</b></p> <p>ET informed the meeting that WEA Cymru South West region will be working with partners to apply for European funding to target specific groups. ET has been looking at forming a new working agreement with representatives from Sardinian Horse and Pony traps. This will bring in a new cohort of learners.</p> <p>Caroline Streek (CS) requested that a list of activities be circulated to branches so that they know what additional activities are going on in their region.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> MR to take this to marketing group.</p>	Martyn Reed

	<p>Ray Neil (RN) informed the meeting that an application for external funding will be made to extend the RES project which delivers contextualised learning to assist people with essential skills needs. They have exceeded their target and have engaged over 800 learners.</p> <p>Discussion took place regarding the website and how up to date the course listing is kept. It was suggested that learners could be involved in testing the website in order to ensure that the new website meets needs of learners.</p> <p>KO questioned why WEA branches are placed in the same group as affiliated groups when it was branches who founded the WEA? DR explained how the affiliated groups differ from branches based on their affiliation fee paid and the number of votes they receive. Branches have more representation through their voting rights and have their own representative on council.</p>	
7	<p><b>DEVELOPMENT OF VOLUNTARY MOVEMENT</b></p> <p>DR outlined the current drive to develop and support branches and membership. Currently we have approximately 600 members with a target of 1000 by end of the year. MR also has a role in supporting branches. The aim is to develop branches out of local learner forums.</p> <p>KO: described the former role of the Voluntary Movement Committee (VMC) in discussing branch activity. KO had previously proposed that there be a branch committee. No action was taken to move this forward during merger. KO indicated his concern that significant branches had demised due to the passing away of key members of those branches.</p> <p>SD <b>proposed</b> that the regional forums takes it upon themselves to reconstitute the dormant branches of Neath and Swansea.</p> <p>SR stressed that branches need to continue to engage with young people so that there is not die off.</p> <p>PE stated that no two branches that are the same. He has requested data based on branch class activity, but this has been delayed by the need to ensure MIS systems are up to date before generating the required report. PE reported that there has been a decline in branches in the North, but there is strong feeling for them to grow.</p>	Proposed for future discussion

	<p>PE stressed his concerns that there is complacency within the organisation and few new ideas coming through. He suggested that it needs to come from grass roots with more demands going upwards. PE requested support from branches so that he is able to ask sensible questions.</p> <p>PE stated that at this point in time the Council had not yet met. First agenda item for council meeting should be outstanding issues.</p> <p>Additional points raised by PE were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enrolment duplication is an ongoing problem for learners</li> <li>• What benefits could be provided for being part of WEA Cymru</li> <li>• The regional forum distribution should be based on travel rather than geographical area</li> </ul> <p>PE stated that his role to represent all the issues of all the branches is impossible.</p> <p>SR suggested that a branch should be responsible for its own organisation, but there should be a minimum framework for branches to comply to so that data can be collected.</p> <p>PE highlighted that there are issues around tutor employment as some branches also employ non WEA tutors.</p> <p>PE stressed that each branch should pay attention to succession planning to ensure that branches do not demise.</p> <p>SR proposed that branches should be looking to link with partners to access European funding to address local skills needs. A conversation needs to be had regarding how branches are established so they are linked up with local initiatives.</p> <p>SD <b>proposed</b> that we look at what is most successful in each branch and put on a taster in the autumn to engage new communities within targeted groups of Neath and Port Talbot.</p> <p>DR said that another way forward was for branches to come together to put on activities to bring people together.</p> <p>DR stated that the Clerk did not have firm dates for Council meetings (that Regional Forums could synchronize with) but Regional Forums were welcome to arrange their meetings first.</p>	<p>Proposed for future discussion</p>
8	<b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b>	Sonia Reynolds to

	<p>Wednesday 15th October 2014  Time: 13.00 to 15.00  Venue: Upper Amon Valley</p>	<p>confirm venue.</p>
<p>9</p>	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <p>MR informed the meeting that the organisation was developing a membership database called. This will be used to accurately track all categories of membership including local forum and branch membership.</p> <p>KO asked if there an intention to reimburse individuals for their travelling expenses when attending regional forums. A proposal was made that there should be recompense for travel.  <b>ACTION:</b> DR to seek clear guidance regarding funding travel.</p> <p>SD observed that a distinction was already being made between those attending the meeting who are paid and those who attend voluntarily.</p> <p>Eleanor Jones (EJ) raised a point concerning the attendance of staff who are not individual members. It was questioned whether they should they have to attend.  <b>ACTION:</b> DR to seek clear guidance on who should have to attend.</p> <p>The question was raised as to whether the South West regional forum should establish standing orders. SR observed that this cannot move forward until council meets.  SD <b>proposed</b> that the forum has its own standing orders.  SR <b>proposed</b> a task &amp; finish group to develop standing orders. Members to include DR, SD, EJ SR, CS</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> SR to convene a T&amp;F group to develop standing orders.</p> <p>MR informed those present that WEA Cymru had invested in the ‘VocalEyes’ system developed by Pembrokeshire College. The social media platform will allow WEA staff, members and learners to put forward ideas and vote online for ideas they think should be taken forward. This will also provide another means for WEA Cymru to feedback to learners and staff.</p>	<p>Dafydd Rhys</p> <p>Dafydd Rhys</p> <p>Sonia Reynolds/ Eleanor Jones</p>

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