



## **MINUTES OF THE THIRD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF ADDYSG OEDOLION CYMRU | ADULT LEARNING WALES**

**Held on Saturday 23 March 2019 at Wrexham Glyndŵr University's  
Wrexham Campus**

### **Present:**

**Officers** – John Graystone (Chair), Kathryn Robson (Chief Executive), Stephen Thomas (Company Secretary/Clerk) (3).

**Individual Members, Supporters or Staff** – Mark Baines, Gareth Cork, Caroline Davies, David Elis-Williams, Gayle Hudson, Michelle Kerswell, Sheila Maxwell, Eileen Moyle, Stephen Nicholls, Alexandra Raab, Dafydd Rhys, Julie Roberts, Suzanne Samuel, Nick Taylor, Kirsty Merlin Tudor (15).

**Individual Members & Branch representatives** – Cathy Clark (Oakdale & Blackwood), Jenni Jones-Annetts (Caerphilly), Daryl Leeworthy (Merthyr Tydfil), David MacManus (Caerphilly), Sonia Reynolds (Upper Amman & Twrch Valley), Marilyn Thomas (Caerphilly) (6).

**Individual Member & Affiliated Organisation representative** – David Smith (Co-operatives & Mutuels Wales) (1).

**Speakers, Award Winners and Others present variously during the day** – Lesley Griffiths AM (Member for Wrexham, National Assembly for Wales); Philip Beacall (Margaret Jones Award winner), Dilys Beacall, Jeanette Dowinton, Cath Hicks, Andrew Tudor, Jane Watkins; Cilla Ross (workshop leader); Iwan Hywel (Mentrau Iaith Cymru); Richard Knoyle (Auditor, Btp Associates Ltd.); Gwynfor Owen (simultaneous interpreter); Mike Dean (photographer) (12).

### **Apologies:**

Vivien Allen, Leanne Andreadis, Rachel Burton, Sue Carlick, Julie Cook (Wales TUC Cymru), Cath Dawkes, Maggi Dawson (Upper Amman & Twrch Valley branch), Amanda Doyle, Christopher Franks, Christina Gallagher, Jeremy Gass, Adele Gatt, Louise Gaw (Arts Factory), David Girdler, Jonathan Goddard, Adrian Heathfield, Martin Hughes, Gerry Jenson, June Jeremy, Ron Leach (Unite the Union, Cardiff Univ.), Matthew Lloyd, Nichola Lowe, Hazel Maguire, G.I.G. Marsden, Clive Morgan, W.J. Morris, Kalpana Natarajan, Tim Owen, Graham Price, Martyn Reed, Donna Ridler, Susan Roberts, Patrick Robson, Toni Schiavone, Guy Wallace Smith, Jan Tiley, Russell Todd, Heather Willbourn, Ceri Williams, Huw Williams (Merthyr Tydfil branch) (40).

Item	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ADDYSG OEDOLION CYMRU   ADULT LEARNING WALES ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2019</b></p>
1.	<p><b>Conference Workshops and Awards Ceremony</b></p> <p>In the first workshop prior to lunch, Cilla Ross of The Co-operative College spoke about exciting developments in creating a Co-operative University. As a member of the Centenary Commission marking the anniversary of a ground-breaking 1919 report into adult education, she also explained the public campaign promoting it, and participants broke into small groups to answer the 12 questions which the Commission was focussed upon. The second workshop led by Mark Baines and Cath Hicks looked at how best to use monies from our members and supporters which were already in the organisation's coffers, and how to seek future donations and legacies. Participants formed groups and provided feedback on ideas about means to achieve positive returns.</p> <p>With Wrexham's AM Lesley Griffiths present, the Margaret Jones Award for 2019 was then presented to Philip Beacall of Denbighshire. This annual award, which recognises an individual who has overcome barriers to succeed while learning with us, noted Phil's progress in various Photography courses following support in adapting to the fact that he has cerebral palsy. The Siân Thomason award marks a learner or group whose contribution has inspired others, and the 2019 winner was a group of 9 black and ethnic minority women from Grangetown in Cardiff. They were unable to be present, so the award was received on their behalf by Michelle Kerswell who explained more about the way that the group had moved from cake decoration classes to learning information technology skills and to greater integration with other communities in southern Wales.</p>
2.	<p><b>Introduction to the Annual General Meeting (AGM), approval of the previous AGM's minutes and update on achievements relating to motions passed there</b></p> <p>John Graystone welcomed everyone to the AGM. He confirmed that the meeting was convened constitutionally and was quorate, noting that 40 formal apologies had been received. Mark Baines was elected sole teller for the voting requirements. The proxy voting provision in the constitution meant 20 votes had been received beforehand by the Company Secretary. The Chair was appointed as proxy for 19 of them, and the remaining one would be cast by a named member from the Floor.</p> <p>The draft minutes of Addysg Oedolion Cymru   Adult Learning Wales's second Annual General Meeting, held at Neath Town Hall on 14 April 2018, were approved as a correct record (prop.: Cathy Clark; sec.: Daryl Leeworthy).</p> <p>In terms of follow-up action on the five motions passed a year earlier, a document setting out developments had been circulated with the AGM's papers. Various members of staff spoke to it. On addressing loneliness, while it was acknowledged there was more work to be done, a fair amount had been undertaken in subsidising activity, much of it centred on branches (with Merthyr Tydfil being a particularly</p>

	<p>good and replicable model). A structure of reduced fees for branches was a linked initiative to encourage participation, and funded travel for certain students was a further means of reducing barriers in some cases.</p> <p>As for the use of plastics and the Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship agenda, there had been much material uploaded to the Organisation’s Sharepoint and Moodle platforms for use by tutors and learners on this as a cross-cutting theme – though it was pointed out that not all tutors used those platforms. There were also keen staff environmental champions monitoring plastic use in our offices (though not all landlords at our rented office sites were fully amenable to reducing plastic use). Regional Forums were being utilised as means of extending these messages too. One suggestion from the Floor was to use the agenda sheets of all types of meeting to encourage participants to bring their own re-usable mugs/ cups to such gatherings: it was noted that single-use plastics had been used that day by Wrexham Glyndŵr University’s caterers.</p> <p>The motion about a co-operative Wales had been central to the first workshop held that morning. David Smith was thanked for his continued commitment in working with the Organisation on this theme, ensuring that a national strategic group and a number of sub-groups stemming from it kept up momentum on collaborative approaches in adult education (though admittedly the January 2019 Estyn inspection had slowed some of that momentum).</p> <p>Regarding the motion on member participation and democratic arrangements, two Welsh Government consultative exercises of 2018 had been well-supported initiatives, and it was a pity that the Welsh Government considered the thousands of responses generated from among our members to be equivalent merely to a single, institutional answer. As for democratic arrangements, the constitutional review of them timetabled by April 2020 would provide a chance for members to comment on how they believed the present arrangements (now in place 2 years) were working.</p> <p>Finally, on the issue of the Organisation’s membership, the system whereby learners were encouraged to become free members meant that our membership had grown to some 2,700 people currently. It was appreciated that this needed to be converted to becoming a meaningful form of membership, through the encouragement work being undertaken by Dafydd Rhys and others. It was also true that not all tutors were fully on board with the importance of this yet, and required further training on it. The new, unified tutor day and Regional Forum meetings each term should assist in that understanding, and reforming Regional Forums to provide an incentive for learners and tutors to take part together was considered a good move. The extended membership’s impact in terms of a higher quorum requirement at AGMs – constitutionally 40 members, which included proxy votes – was also noted.</p>
3.	<p><b>Presentation of Addysg Oedolion Cymru   Adult Learning Wales’s Annual Report and Financial Statements 2017/18</b></p> <p>David Elis-Williams, Chair of the Resources Committee, referred to the brief financial information circulated with the AGM papers. The full Report and Financial</p>

	<p>Statements, made available at registration, had been approved by the Council. All of the Organisation's 6 financial objectives for the year were achieved, and in pointing members to page 25 of the Report he spoke of a small operational surplus before obligatory pension charges were applied, which had resulted in an overall deficit.</p> <p>Richard Knoyle on behalf of auditors Btp Associates Ltd. confirmed that their report was again unqualified (i.e. positive) and read out the auditors' opinion from the Report, which stated that it had been prepared in accordance with statutory and legal requirements.</p> <p>It was proposed that the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2018 be received (prop.: David Smith; sec.: Sonia Reynolds) and this was approved with 51 votes in favour, none against and no abstentions – this and subsequent voting totals including all proxy votes cast. Richard Knoyle was thanked for his input, and left the meeting at this juncture.</p>
4.	<p><b>Re-appointment of Btp Associates Ltd. as auditors for the 2018/19 financial year</b></p> <p>As a member of the Audit Committee, Sonia Reynolds stated that it was content with Btp Associates Ltd. as auditors and proposed their re-appointment for the 2018/19 financial year exercise. The proposal (prop.: Sonia Reynolds; sec.: Gareth Cork) was approved, again with 51 votes in favour, none against and no abstentions.</p>
5.	<p><b>Report from our representatives on four University Courts</b></p> <p>This was a new agenda item, informing members of developments resulting from the formal status that the Organisation had on the Courts of Aberystwyth, Bangor, Cardiff and Swansea Universities. Two of the four written reports were augmented by verbal impressions. David Elis-Williams spoke of his experience over three years on Bangor's Court, which consistently provided an overview of positive educational developments at the University, but in addition this year had seen a degree of franker answerability in response to questioning – for example on the future of the residence formerly occupied by its outgoing Vice chancellor. Jenni Jones-Annetts, in her first year as representative at Cardiff, reported that the highlight for the Organisation was the presentation made to her predecessor, Elaine Gwynne, who had stepped down after 33 years in the role in the name of WEA and of Addysg Oedolion Cymru   Adult Learning Wales.</p> <p>David Smith wondered whether it was possible to submit motions to these Courts, in particular in relation to the Centenary Commission on the 1919 Adult Education Report and its outcomes. Enquiries would be made so that, if feasible, a standardised motion could be put before the Courts when they met in 2020.</p>
6.	<p><b>Chief Executive's Report on the year's work</b></p> <p>Using a PowerPoint presentation, Kathryn Robson spoke of the Organisation's new vision and mission statements and strategic goals that had resulted from a Planning Day held in summer 2018. Figures from our 2017/18 educational provision showed</p>

	<p>we were a part of the poor track record that the nation as a whole had in teaching the Welsh language. We were not doing enough to raise our profile either (as had been made clear in the second workshop that morning), though the sort of sustainable growth that we were seeking involved more than merely money: it also meant expansion in members, learners and reach – our current weak presence in Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion being one example that needed acting upon. The overall number of our learners had fallen steadily over the previous two years as we concentrated more on educational progression for them, meeting Ministerial priorities, and so running fewer short courses. While we continued to negotiate with the Welsh Government over the importance of maintaining funding for our non-accredited work, our learners’ success rate trend remained upwards. Our partnership approach was unique and important to us, though we needed to do more for younger learners by approaching youth organisations to offer our partnered services.</p> <p>She emphasised the importance of our Estyn inspection of a couple of months earlier, for which Mark Baines and Michelle Kerswell had been key personnel. Its outcomes would remain confidential until the report’s publication in May, but overall its findings on good standards of teaching and learning were consistent with our own views, while it had identified that more work needed to be done on aspects of impact assessment, safeguarding and of support for learners. Our levels of engagement with the Welsh Government, Ministers and Assembly Members were good, and there had been heartening recent developments on pay awards and policies on tutors. However, it had been a sad, rather emotional exercise finally to put our Harlech campus on the market: it was hoped to confirm its sale soon. The Chief Executive’s report was formally received by the meeting.</p>
7.	<p><b>Chair’s Report on the past year – including list of Council members in post during 2018/19</b></p> <p>John Graystone referred attendees to the list of Council members active in the period since the previous year’s AGM, thanking them for their service. He mentioned Gayle Hudson in particular, who was stepping down from her appointed governor’s role at the end of the month, and noted that 5 new Council members had started their terms of service during the year. He was especially grateful to the two Vice Chairs and Chairs of Committees for their continuing good work, and more generally to staff, volunteers and branches for their dedication.</p> <p>He talked of the need to show the ‘added value’ of our work as an institution, and of the role that the Organisation had in furthering our learners’ democratic awareness especially given the divided society that was clear from developments over Brexit, stark divisions between the haves and the have nots, and the importance of climate change. He also noted that a number of pieces of educational reform discussed at previous AGMs, such as the Hazelkorn Review, the Donaldson Report and the restructuring of community adult education in Wales, were still unresolved in terms of their outcomes. The Chair’s report was formally received by the meeting.</p>

8. Resolutions for Debate

**Resolution 1**

*This AGM welcomes the commitment made by Kirsty Williams, the Welsh Government's Minister for Education, to the educational philosophy of Raymond Williams in the 2018 Raymond Williams Memorial Lecture. We call upon the officers and Chief Executive of Addysg Oedolion Cymru | Adult Learning Wales to seek a meeting with the Minister to explore how the Welsh Government can support the Organisation to provide learning for the sake of learning, towards achieving Raymond Williams's goal of creating an educated democracy.*

Proposer: Jeremy Gass; Seconder: Daryl Leeworthy.

Amendment: *Delete the second sentence after the comma and replace it with: "... , in addition to preparing individuals for the modern world of work, thereby achieving Raymond Williams's goal of creating an educated democracy while promoting equality of well-being through adult community learning in collaboration with others."*

Proposer: David Smith; Seconder: Cartrefi Cymru Co-operative.

The resolution was moved by Daryl Leeworthy, who accepted the amendment on behalf of the proposers. He quoted statements from Raymond Williams on adult education's role in building common cultural approaches and reducing cultural distances, stating that a visit by the Minister for Education to the Merthyr Tydfil branch in February clearly showed her commitment to aspects of his philosophy. David Smith explained his intention in adding the expanded second sentence, and referred to the achievements garnered through working together over the previous 18 months. He saw the Co-operative University concept as being equivalent to the National Community College which AOC|ALW was aspiring to become, showing once more that collaboration with others was a key part of initiatives to be undertaken.

**The resolution was carried, as amended by the Amendment, as follows:**

**In Favour: 50  
Against: 0  
Abstention: 2**

**Resolution 2**

*This AGM recognises that with an increasingly aged population the provision of education to the elderly by Addysg Oedolion Cymru | Adult Learning Wales is extremely beneficial. This is so in terms of combating loneliness, countering depression, and reducing dementia by encouraging intellectual activity. This meeting therefore requests that the Organisation increase its arrangements for people in this category.*

Proposer: Caerphilly Branch, Addysg Oedolion Cymru | Adult Learning Wales;  
Seconder: David MacManus.

This resolution, proposed by Jenni Jones-Annetts on behalf of the Caerphilly branch, had also received support at the South East Regional Forum. There was a fear that funding for courses such as those conducted by the branch was to be cut, and despite some media depictions not all older people were well-heeled. David MacManus referred to the fact that he was first introduced to the Organisation by a 97-year-old. Daryl Leeworthy confirmed that Merthyr Tydfil branch members echoed the resolution's sentiments. David Smith added that inter-generational working was important and locally-based decision making a key to continuing independence among the elderly. Discussion referred to the fact that there was more funding being made available by the Organisation to non-accredited provision, including at branches; this reflected that management had listened to what had been stated at Regional Forums and elsewhere and had acted upon it. In concluding, Jenni Jones-Annetts conceded that, since the motion was drawn up, the Council had heard that there was more money to come the way of branches, but the plea remained that classes generally continue to be made affordable.

**The resolution was carried as follows:**

**In Favour: 52  
Against: 0  
Abstention: 1**

### **Resolution 3**

*This AGM calls on Addysg Oedolion Cymru | Adult Learning Wales to ensure that learners can learn at their own pace, with adequate personal support and with consideration of their varying needs. Support should be provided in particular for male learners to enable them to be comfortable to convey any additional needs.*

Proposer: Eileen Moyle; Seconder: Jean Farr.

Eileen Moyle explained that the motion's sentiments stemmed from observations in classes she had attended that men of a particular generation were especially susceptible to not coming forward to express potential difficulties they were encountering. While it was clear from what had been heard earlier that the Organisation was already doing some of this supportive work, there remained more emphasis possible – through the application of IT to other subjects, for example. Her seconder, a fellow learner, was of the same opinion and had submitted her comments (in absentia) in writing.

In response, it was reported that legislation was coming into force in 2020 to support those with learning needs, and though it was channelled more towards younger adults the Organisation accepted that older ones sometimes required it too. While systems were in place, it was acknowledged by Michelle Kerswell that there also needed to be informal opportunities for learners to express their needs for help. This included means by which tutors could pick up such demands, perhaps subtly, without the need for official disclosure and without necessarily demanding the completion of a form.

	<p><b>The resolution was carried as follows:</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>In Favour: 48</b> <b>Against: 1</b> <b>Abstention: 4</b></p>
9.	<p><b>Thanks and Closing Comments</b></p> <p>John Graystone thanked presenters, award winners and members for their input to the day – and especially those staff most directly involved with its arrangements, which had gone smoothly. He apologised for the slight over-run in timing, but was keen to allow the opportunity for full debate on the resolutions, and wished everyone a pleasant homeward journey.</p>

DRAFT