# Young Proud and Cornish

Action research project to investigate the attitudes and values of young people towards Cornish language and its associated culture

October 2007 to April 2008

#### **Executive Summary**

In October 2007, Livewire Youth Project undertook an action research programme to answer question to the broad question of the engagement of young people in language and cultural learning. The project ran for 6 months and engaged young people in dialogue, consultation and programmes of activity to assess young people attitudes toward Cornish language and culture and gain their insights into its development. The project tried a variety of activities and approaches to the engagement of young people using youth work methods with varying success and has based any conclusions and recommendations on these.

Broadly speaking it has been found that young people are supportive of Cornish language and would not resist its reintroduction into the local community as they value its history and uniqueness. Young people did however have problem with defining culture and thus had difficulty in assessing their attitudes to it.

There were found to be 3 levels of language uptake in the young participants:

- Recognition
- Basic phrases
- Full engagement

It was found that the many young people have little desire to take up language learning at this point but support its reintroduction. Some young people are willing to engage in the learning of some basic phrases, mainly to support anyone in their peer network/friendship group who wants to learn more in-depth. This shows us that the engagement of peer networks will be central to the maximal success of language uptake.

There are 8 main recommendations from this research that focus on the following broad themes:

- Young peoples inclusion. Young people should be included in all aspects of
  the development of this work. Developing systems for young people's
  inclusion will ensure the whole process remains relevant to young people
  today. It is recognised that it is young people who are the professionals with
  regard to modern youth culture and are best placed to steer the process
  successfully.
- Engage partners in the process. To maximise the opportunity for success the
  partnership needs to look expansively at the potential for delivery and
  development outside of the language community in the statutory, community
  and voluntary sectors.
- Resources. There is a lack of resources for the delivery of language services outside of traditional educational spheres, in terms of human resources and learning resources for successful and sustained delivery. To enable a rollout of language engagement through cultural change the partnership will need to look at addressing these issues.

#### Introduction

For many years the Cornish Language Community has been growing in numbers and with it a political and community will to put Cornish at the heart of our community and economy. There has been an enduring will from everyone within the language movement to encourage young people to take up the use of Cornish.

The success of the adoption of the Cornish language under part 2 of the European Charter for Minority Languages in 2002, bought with it an unprecedented opportunity to undertake pieces of work to investigate and strengthen the position of the language in our communities.

This has meant that we could also carry out dedicated pieces of research such as this one to ensure that the whole process is driven by the needs and wishes of both current and potential users. While such research can sometimes bring unexpected or unwelcome data, it has a 2 fold benefit of both raising the awareness of Cornish Language outside the current language using community and ensuring that we have a realistic picture.

In the early autumn of 2007 Livewire Youth Project was approached to undertake a 6 month project to research young people's involvement in the language which started in October of that year. Since then Livewire has undertaken a wide variety of projects to look at young people's position. In many respects this project can be seen as a pilot project due to the practical method of its delivery and the learning that has been achieved.

#### Methodology

It was agreed to undertake this piece of work as an Action Research project. Which in this context means 'the systematic collection of information that is designed to bring about social change' (Bogdan and Biklen 1992: 223) For the main part this means that the research was an experiential piece of work that involved Livewire undertaking various discrete, 'hands on' pieces of work in the course of its youth work rather than a wholly empirical piece of research. Therefore much of the results are experiential and observational in their nature.



This approach fits well with the pedagogical approaches of youth work that emphasises the inclusion and participation of young people in sustained service delivery. This approach was useful in that it engaged the researcher in the biography of the participants and allowed a more in-depth look at the cultures and tailor appropriate interventions.

It should be understood however that this approach means that the researcher is, in

some respects, also a participant in the research and will ultimately have an influence on the results in some small way. Other variables may include the geographical location of the research, and thus what works in this geographical location may not work elsewhere.

The research seeks to engage attitudes and opinions from those young people aged 13 to 21 years of age. It is generally accepted that young people in this age bracket are able to make informed decisions with regard to their own thoughts and opinions and are able to articulate them. This piece of research is undertaken with this understanding.

This piece of work makes no attempt to enter into any debate around the differing written forms of language but takes on the language in its cultural entirety i.e. there is one Cornish language that is written in differing ways. There has been no attempt to engage young people in the ongoing debates as it is the belief of the researcher and the organisation that it would be counterproductive to the encouragement of language take-up and is not directly relevant to the research brief.

It is understood that the nature of Action Research is that the researcher builds a personal relationship with the people involved. In any relationship particularly in a teacher/youth worker relationship there is a power dimension that may skew any results. To attempt to mitigate the effect of the power relationship that inevitably exists, all questionnaires were undertaken anonymously.

#### **Project Background**

Livewire Youth Project is a registered charity whose aims are to promote the development of youth services in Saltash and the surrounding area. Livewire was opened in 1946 as the Waterside Youth Club and developed eventually to Livewire in 1999 after a major survey of young peoples needs.

Livewire is primarily a youth music project that delivers music learning alongside a generic youth work curriculum. The centre follows the guidelines of Cornwall Youth Service and is managed by a worker employed through Cornwall Youth Service.

#### **Questions from the Project Brief**

It is necessary for this report to respond to the following questions which were discussed and agreed with Jenefer Lowe and the Cornish Language Partnership. Although this report is primarily about language it is important to note that language is intrinsically linked to ideas of culture and identity. Therefore it is necessary to contextualise the research in this way.

- To what extent are young people engaged in Cornish Culture
- How do young people in Cornwall define themselves culturally?
  - What are their attitudes to Cornish Culture
  - How do young people define Cornish Culture
  - How do they feel about the Cornish Language
  - For what reasons would young people engage in the Cornish Language
  - How do we engage young people who do not define themselves as Cornish in language learning and development
- Where would the best areas be to commence a sustained programme of language and culture development?
- How do we best structure campaigns for maximum engagement of young people?
- What sorts of approaches to the area of work would potentially have a greater effect.

According to Simon Jager (2008, online), people undertake language learning for many reasons such as travel abroad and work. These are not expected to be of particular relevance for this research which is primarily working with school age young people as it is a matter of the reintroduction of indigenous language. Therefore other relevant indicative motivators may include family and friends, secret communication, getting in touch with your roots, revitalising and reviving your language, culture and linguistic interest.

It is with this in mind that these questions were created and structured.

#### **CD Production**

After a major piece of research into young peoples needs completed by Livewire in 1999, it was found that many young people in Saltash wanted to undertake music learning. It was suggested that we seek to engage young people therefore in this way and the CD project was undertaken to look at the take up of Cornish through the medium of music.

During that time there were approximately 10 active bands and solo artists and 7 chose to participate in the creation of the CD alongside 2 young studio technicians and a graphic artist. After initial ideas of a competition to fund a single band CD were found to be unpopular the project shifted to a more inclusive compilation approach.

It was necessary for us to consider how to introduce Cornish to the bands and thus each band was required to commit to at least one line of Cornish language in their song to be included on the CD. This small introduction enabled us to build the confidence of young people in using Cornish who expressed a fear of failure and being overwhelmed.



Having become aware of the consternation, we considered ways in which the process could be handled to further support the uptake. To do so we created vocal recordings of the Cornish lines spoken so that young people could hear the lines in their own time and we gave one to one support to the vocalists to help them perfect the vocals. The lyrics were translated by Dr Ken George who ensured that the translations were accurate and consistent with the original lyrics whilst maintaining the integrity of the Cornish construction in its translation.

"Built my confidence and showed me the effectiveness of involving different languages in lyrics"

Despite the reservations of young people, the excitement generated by the project exceeded our expectations and were very surprised by the numbers of young people who were interested. This included young people who were not musicians but were interesting in supporting the project as it gave them an opportunity to use their skills to contribute

to the aims of the project without engaging in language learning directly. This included studio engineering, graphic design and website design/creation.

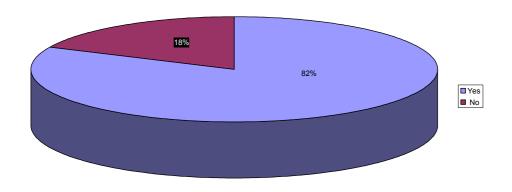
At the point this report was being written the second CD was in development where young people would use more Cornish in their songs which has been made possible through a process of confidence building.

#### Results of the evaluation questionnaire for the CD project

It is not the intention to fill the main body of the report with unnecessary data and thus the complete set of responses to this questionnaire is available in the Appendices along with a sample copy of the questionnaire (Appendices 1 and 2).

#### Question 1

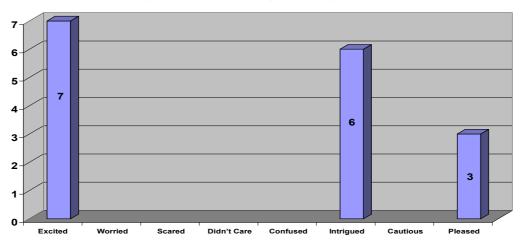
Were you aware of the Cornish language before the project start?



Most young people knew about the Cornish language before the start of the project. This was probably because they were made aware of the project and thus would have answered in the positive.

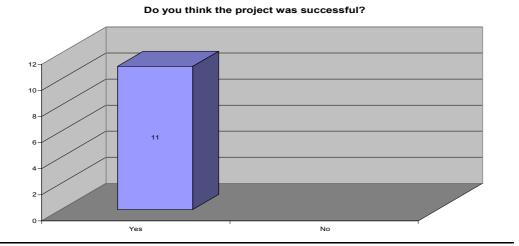
#### Question 2

How did you feel about the project when you first started?



As reflected in much of the other research, many young people were intrigued by Cornish and excited at the opportunity to try it.

#### Question 3



Young people unanimously believed the project was a success.

#### Question 4

#### In what ways have you personally benefited from the project

This is one of a number of attitudinal questions. The young people generally talked about learning Cornish as a benefit, some focussed on bettering their music in some way and two people talked of building confidence.

#### Question 5

#### In what ways has your band benefited from the project

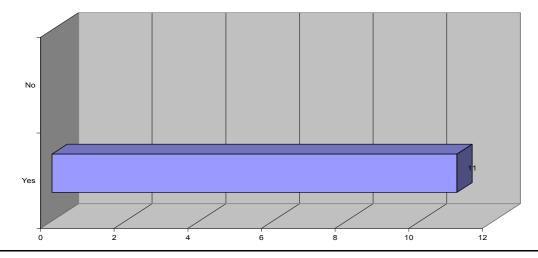
Unfortunately one band split, although not as a result of the project. Other respondents responded that the band has benefited from being promoted by means of the CD and gaining confidence.

#### Question 6

# <u>Is there any way you can think of that we can improve what we did for the next project?</u>

The responses were varied and were all individual. Ranging from more time to learn the Cornish to getting feedback from listeners

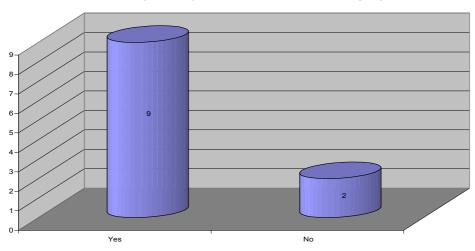
Do you think this is a good way to get young people involved in learning the language?



Young people unanimously thought this was a good way to involve young people in language learning.

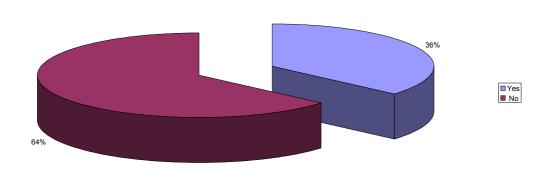
#### **Question 8**

Has it changed how you feel about the Cornish language?



Most young people felt that the project had changed their attitudes to Cornish positively.

Do you now use more Cornish in your everyday life?

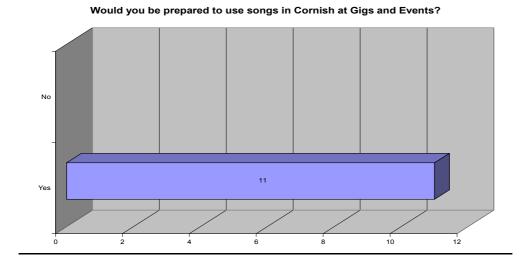


This was a very positive result for the project. Although the experience showed that most young people didn't use a lot more Cornish, a third of respondents identified the fact that they did.

#### Question 10

Would you like to do more music in Cornish?

Again a very encouraging result in that young people have embraced Cornish and are all happy to do more songs in Cornish which provides a great opportunity to expand the available Cornish recorded material and engage young music listeners in contemporary music.



All of the young people who took part in the CD project evaluation would be happy to use Cornish in their gigs.

#### **Attitudinal Survey**

As part of the formal part of the research we undertook an attitudinal questionnaire towards Cornish. Through our day to day work it quickly became apparent that young people's attitudes to the Cornish language is closely tied in with that of culture and identity as expected. Therefore it became necessary to undertake some investigation into broader attitudes to Cornish culture alongside the language research.

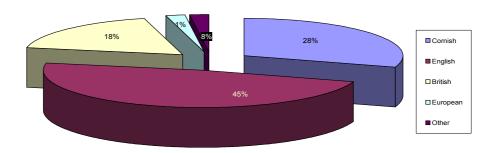
The questions were phrased to attempt to be as user friendly as possible. With the desire for as wide a spread as possible of young people it was attempted to create wording that was accessible for young people of varying ages and educational attainment.

"It would be silly if Cornish people didn't know their own language"

We went onto the streets of Saltash, attended other youth centres and contacted Schools to try to maximise feedback from different types of young people with varying success. Once again full responses are in the appendices along with a blank copy of the questionnaire. (Appendices 3 and 4)

The response from local schools was low with only Liskeard School offering an opportunity to engage young people. One major point of interest that came out of this research is that when asked, some young people found it difficult to define culture and without context they found it difficult to answer the related questions. This is important to note when talking about language usage as it is clear that language development cannot be undertaken in isolation and thus for the most part, with Cornish, there is an identity and culture dimension that must be attended to for the learning where there is currently little other sufficient reason.

When asked, what do you say about where you come from?

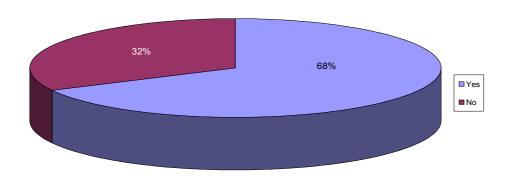


We see from the above chart that a quarter of young people identify themselves as Cornish with a majority identifying as English and a smaller number British. This is to be expected when English is the dominant culture and has been for some time.

The "other" category mostly included young people who identify themselves from other UK communities such as Welsh or Scottish.

#### Question 2

Do you think its good to be a Cornish person?

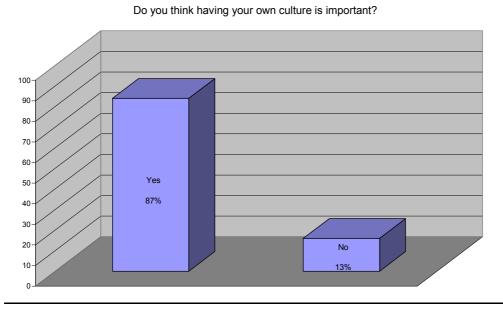


This question was designed to ascertain young people's attitudes towards being Cornish. It does not specify that the participant has to be Cornish to answer the

question and therefore also embraces the attitudes of young people who do not identify themselves as Cornish but live in Cornwall or access Cornish Services such as Livewire.

Many respondents identified with the geography (beaches and countryside), unique identity and heritage as positive reason to be Cornish. Negative responses include boredom and stereotyping discourses.

#### Question 3



87% of respondents thought that having your own culture was important. Once again when asked, many respondents identified culture with identity and individuality and a sense of belonging.

#### Question 4

Had you heard of the Cornish Language before this questionnaire?

Yes 92%

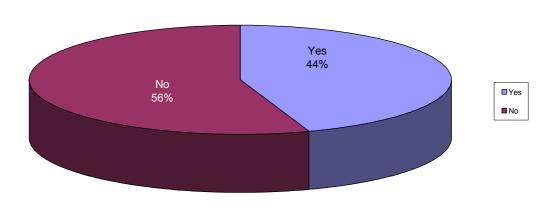
92%

12

92% of respondents had heard of the Cornish language before undertaking this questionnaire. This could have been due to the fact that there is prominent bi-lingual signage in Saltash.

#### Question 5

Do you know any Cornish Words?



Just over half of the respondents knew a Cornish word or two. Common sources were attendance to Brunel Primary School and parents. Some young people accredited language learning in this question to attendance at Livewire so brings the validity of this question into doubt when trying to ascertain general knowledge within the young population.

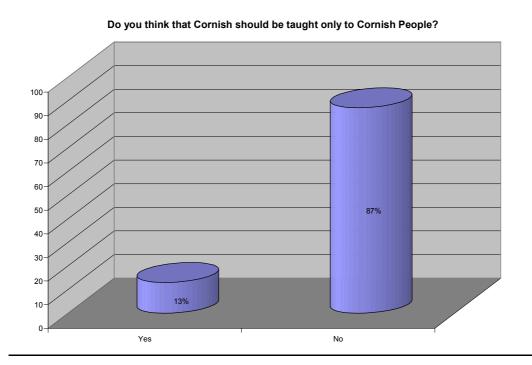
This would further suggest however that if the young respondents of Livewire were a majority, then the general knowledge is very low within the general young populace. This is further impacted by the fact that at least one young person believed that words like 'buggerlugs' and 'drekkly' were Cornish words on further investigation.

Yes (Compulsory) Yes (Optional) No

Do you think that people living in Cornwall should learn to speak Cornish?

This was an interesting response from the young people. The majority of young people thought that people should learn to speak Cornish, however it should be optional. This again reflects the broad support for Cornish among the young population but recognises that Cornish should not be insular.

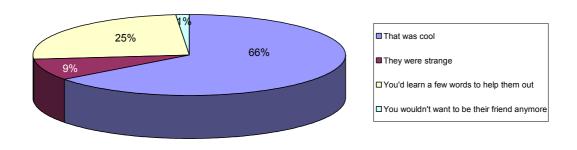
#### Question 7



This question sees where young people centralise the language. The overwhelming response suggests that young people do not see Cornish as a Cornwall only language.

#### Question 8

#### If your friend wanted to speak Cornish, what would you think?



This question considers the impact of the introduction of Cornish language into young people's social circles as well as broader attitudes to Cornish. Two thirds of young people thought this would be fine with a further quarter saying they would actively support their friends by learning some Cornish. That being said, through experience of working with young people the method of learning would most likely be through peer networks rather than formal learning.

#### **Learning Sessions**

Initially the learning sessions were created for young people to undertake as part of a development session on a Saturday morning. The pedagogical approach is one that follows the ethics and values of youth work but approaches the sessions by means of



a non-formal education method. This meant that whilst the sessions were structured, they were completely voluntary in attendance and focussed not only on language learning but gave attention to group and social dynamics to achieve personal development. This approach facilitated the understanding of the language in a cultural context and offered a sense of relevance to the young people at a personal and cultural level.

The sessions attracted a small group of young people of varying age (within the project parameters), gender, and ability.

As a part of their language sessions, each young person was offered an opportunity to achieve a Cornwall Youth Service Activity Award as a part of their learning. (See appendix 5) This was very popular with the attendees who all signed up to the activity award. This was a good motivator for the young people as it was a way to express their development in the language learning. At the time of writing this report 7 young people had attained an Activity Award (See appendix 6) with 3 more in progress.

These sessions have been the mainstay of language learning within the research time and as expected, after a period of time, the group settled into a routine that included an hour of language learning, followed by activities. These activities proved extremely successful and were found to be an extremely productive way of engaging young people in the language. Ideas were created or adapted from teaching techniques found in Classes such as ladder bingo, to adaptations of popular 'board' games such as "Rapidough" where people guess the object that is shaped in playdough or plasticine by their team mate.

At Christmas we delivered a Christmas card making session which proved popular and once again the introduction of language through practical mediums was successful.

After a period of time of approximately 3 months, a small group of young people expressed a desire to learn Cornish but were unable to attend on a Saturday. From this was created a Thursday evening learning group within the generic youth work session. These sessions lasted 30 minutes and were wherever possible activity based.

It was essential for the learning lessons to be manageable for the young people. It has been found that in this setting no more than an hour of teaching is viable and productive. The informal approach was crucial for the inclusion of some young people who felt that the ability to play and express their individuality within their learning is important.

"It's really fun to be able to learn a local language."

Through the session feedbacks it is shown that the main reason young people have become involved in the language learning is for fun.

The delivery of the learning sessions was hampered by the dearth of learning resources to be used in an informal context. The researcher, in the role of educator, had to create and develop resources for delivery. This was costly in terms of time and shows a need for specific learning and activity resources for rolling out to Community and Youth Groups.

#### **Outreach Sessions**

We undertook outreach sessions onto the streets of Saltash at the start of the project in an attempt to access young people who did not traditionally access youth centres. Due to the time of year and continued bad weather this method was found to be ineffective and was abandoned in favour of Saturday morning centre based sessions at Livewire.

There were also outreach sessions to Callington Youth Centre, the Torpoint Young Peoples Cornish Night and Millbrook Youth Club. The primary reasons to do so were to complete the attitudinal survey but also to assess young people's attitude to first steps learning.

With each session there were structured set of learning sessions. For these short sessions, the project followed the non-formal approach to learning and mixed an informal conversation/interrogative approach with structured informal activities such as bingo, simple songs and introductory Cornish through play.

The young people of Callington youth centre were intrigued by the idea and were interested in developing a small community newsletter in Cornish and English as a way of looking at language use.

Millbrook Youth Club was extremely enthused and intrigued by the Cornish and the young people were very inquisitive about the language. The events were received very well and the notion of using music to learn language was very interesting to them. They requested more sessions with music and more generic Cornish learning.



Torpoint School had a Cornish night which approximately 35 young people attended. This was the first opportunity for the research to utilize peer educators. The young people involved in the Livewire learning sessions expressed an interest in teaching other young people so this was a good opportunity to utilise the skills of the young people that are learning to share their skills. This session was therefore split into 3 with the researcher undertaking

number learning, one young person delivering music learning and the second young person doing introductory Cornish (dydh da, fatla genes, ple'th os ta trigys). This worked extremely well and supports the argument for peer education as a method of language dissemination.

Young people from each session requested more sessions and the young people of Torpoint requested further language learning for the purposes of developing a peer education network.

Finally, although outside of the age parameters of the project, we undertook a session in partnership with the Children's Fund to deliver a session to young children. The young children were enthusiastic about Cornish although it was fairly clear they did not understand the cultural relevance of the language. However they enjoyed trying it and learning it. This has been included for completeness of the report and does not influence the recommendations in any way.

#### **Development group**

When the learning sessions were developed at Livewire there was an attempt to create a development group to run alongside the sessions for the purposes of centralising young people in the development of the project. Initial ideas that were shared were the development of bilingual signage around the Centre, the development of a website and the development of an end of project event.

The development group development was problematic due to the turnover of young people at the beginning of the project. In terms of project development this was to be expected in hindsight as some of the initial small group of language learners stopped attending for a variety of reasons. The first young person who was to do the website went onto more in-depth learning of website development and committed to developing the Cornish website as part of the development of the Livewire main website which is still under development at the writing of this report. There was

however a CD website that rose out of this project which can be viewed at <a href="https://www.freewebs.com/splann">www.freewebs.com/splann</a>. Through general discussions with young people through youth work sessions, young people did not express a great desire for language resources online at this time and were not particularly supportive of an individual "myspace" entity.

The young person who was taking responsibility for the development of the signage found it difficult to continue to attend on Saturdays and after some time absent became a regular attendee of the Thursday sessions and one of the project peer educators. The development group idea diminished and was eventually replaced by drama group session. This group did not flourish due to levels of confidence in language use and ability and on reflection would be a better project for young people further into a project when young people have a better grasp of the language.

What is important from this exercise however is the sorts of opportunities that young people will engage in. Through the 6 months of the project, it has been shown that young people were not willing to engage in its structural development but were willing to be participants in the early stages. As confidence grew toward the end of the project, the young people were moving towards a greater involvement as shown by the peer educators going to the Torpoint event.

This is not uncommon in many respects as this type of work is process driven and meaningful and lasting inclusion requires a process of confidence building and providing a sense of ownership for the people involved. To do this takes time, energy and skill.

#### **Travel Opportunities**

Opportunities for intercultural opportunities were investigated as part of this project. Our initial inquiries brought us into contact with Community Music Wales which runs the Youth Music Programme named CIWDOD. The project helps young Welsh bands to change from singing in English to using Welsh. There were discussions and preparations around an inter-Celtic event in South Wales with a Cornish band from Livewire and Welsh bands. This event had to be put on hold due to a restructure of the Community Music Wales organisation which meant that no new work could be undertaken by them until the restructure was completed. (See appendix 5)They are now in a position to continue to develop this opportunity and young people were willing to develop their repertoire to undertake an event such as this.

The second opportunity was to visit Brittany and the Diwan festival. We had arranged for 2 Cornish singing bands to visit Brittany and take part in the celebrations and talk to young Breton speakers to share their Celtic heritage. Once again young people were willing to expand their musical repertoire to take up this great opportunity. Unfortunately, this could not be funded and therefore had to be discarded.

#### **End of Project Event**

The end of project event was not delivered due to unavoidable problems with the completion of the venue space at Livewire. Through the CD questionnaire it was shown that young people are prepared to do gigs and events in Cornish and this could be a possibility as part of any future project delivery.

#### **General Cultural**

Unlike many youth projects, the support for this project has been almost universal. The strength of feeling amongst the wider community has been very positive. Positive feedback from Councillors, community members, youth workers and parents has shown that there is wide support for language learning among young communities.

It was found that having a language worker attached to Livewire has encouraged workers to use a small amount of Cornish in their everyday work. This reflects the responses of young people in the questionnaire who said they would learn some words to support their friends. This seems to be the natural level for many people at this point in the language development. The broader motivational factors for language usage such as religion, work and tourist travel are not visibly present and therefore language learning for this group is based around a willingness to support individuals and groups around them. This locates current language development within the Community, Culture and individual relationship as a primary driver.

It is worth noting this widespread support for language development as it is crucial in acknowledging the young peoples support systems.

What has been an unexpected observation of the project is that young people will encourage their parents to engage in Cornish. Many parents wishing to support their children will take an interest in Cornish to support their children. This challenges the traditional trend of locating family learning in a top down approach where we 'cascade train' by educating the parents to educate the children. By engaging young people in the process, we see a rippling effect out to parents and other family members and young people begin to support the direction of community learning. This is a valuable point for consideration when looking at learning take-up in adult communities.

#### **Conclusions**

As a general conclusion, it should be noted that language integration into young communities will be a long road. Cultural change takes a long time, therefore any work that we undertake must be a part of the long 'vision'. Whilst there may be a few 'quick wins', generally we must accept that the uptake of Cornish to any substantial level will be a slow process.

In many respects perhaps the question to ask is now not, "will young people learn and use Cornish", but more, "how much Cornish will young people learn and use." This provides a dilemma to the language movement as there is a danger of young people integrating a small amount of Cornish into their primary language and not taking up Cornish in its entirety.

The process of working with young people can be frustrating who can be quite changeable in their nature. This project has seen some failures for a variety of reasons. This has been important learning for the purposes of research and the variances of individuals cannot be factored in.

Meeting young people across differing youth centres has made it obvious that there is no one size fits all approach to language integration into youth culture but what is true is that the most effective medium to use is relationship and personal communication. Posters and written media will embed the language into communities generally but will not encourage language use. The interaction between people who

use and want to use Cornish is the way to engage new people in learning. In this respect it is critical that we have people who are using the language, interacting with our young people.

Finally, I would like to note that in a modern democratic society, any decision around the future of young people should include young people. We have political structures for young people to be involved in decision making and we should be talking with young people at every opportunity. The most knowledgeable people in respect to young people are the young people themselves. The development of young democratic structures to consider the process of language planning and delivery is a necessary target.

The following points will seek to answer the specific questions asked within the project brief:

#### To what extent are young people involved in Cornish culture?

There is broad low level support for Cornish language in our young communities but the desire to learn the language to any great degree is very small. This is not surprising in a consumerist society where short term gratification is the norm.

In terms of general culture (and identity) it has been observed that it is not a general consideration for many young people until it is challenged, at which time many young people will be vocally supportive of Cornish as being an important part of their identity.

As noted before, many young people are not able to clearly articulate the meaning of culture and as they were unable to define it they found it difficult to answer questions in relation to it. This was surprising in an age where multiculturalism is a very prominent issue both throughout the media and current discourses on community identity. Young people do not knowingly differentiate between concepts of "high" culture, "mass" culture and "popular" culture and in this way we need to rethink Cornish. Creating opportunities for Cornish within popular culture is essential to engaging young people.

More dominant 'popular' cultural discourses for young people include music and fashion and it is in this way that many young people express their identity and define themselves day to day.

#### How do young people in Cornwall define themselves culturally?

This question was broken down into further questions.

#### What are their attitudes to Cornish Culture

It is obvious that a few young peoples attitudes to Cornish culture are influenced by dominant national cultural discourses that locate Cornish culture as a somewhat parochial and provincial culture that is not particularly desirable and somewhat out of step with the dominant national and global movements and trends. The lack of economic opportunity for young people and inadequate transport infrastructure in Cornwall has also negatively influenced young people's opinions. Where there were discussions about future prospects, some young people would discuss moving away from Cornwall as it did not provide the opportunities they desired for their future careers.

This being said, many young people valued the culture as one that is friendly and is closely tied in with Community, family, history/heritage, geography and identity. It is this association with high and mass culture that in some ways that creates blocks to young people who value popular culture more highly but may provide opportunities.

#### How do young people define Cornish Culture

When asked about defining Cornish Culture, the young people talked about in terms of the environment (beaches, villages) and food (i.e. pasties), but found it difficult to define Cornish culture in any other way.

#### How do they feel about the Cornish Language

Young people feel mostly intrigued by the language. For a few young people they thought that the Cornish language was basically English spoken in a Cornish accent with words like 'drekkly' added to it. These young people were very surprised that there was a unique and distinct language. As we see from the questionnaire, young people feel quite positive about the language. This was borne out in general conversation and dialogue throughout the course of the research.

#### For what reasons would young people engage in the Cornish language?

Through the delivery and research throughout this project it has become clear that there were 3 levels of engagement in Cornish:

- Recognition
- Basic phrases
- In depth learning

Large proportions of young people have acknowledged Cornish and are generally supportive and accepting of the language. They are not particularly interested in taking up the language but accept it and value it as a part of local culture and Community. This is problematic for Cornish in some respects as it will limit the interest in language learning; however this is a positive for Cornish as it shows that there is little hostility towards the language so any development into communities will not be resisted to any large amount.

A smaller amount of young people are interested in basic phrases and will use them at times. This is in part tied into the fact that language learning needs a sustained commitment and many young people feel that this is not a priority for them. This group generally tries the language but finds that it will require a sustained commitment to learn. This group will perhaps be better tackled through school learning, where opportunities for learning will be best delivered as part of the school curriculum. If these young people are given the *choice* of learning at school, they may well choose Cornish.

A small amount of young people engaged in in-depth learning. Of the Livewire regular attendees it has been about 10%. These young people do so mainly because of 3 factors

- Fun
- · Like to learn
- Friends take part

This has been borne out in the use of a non-formal education approach and has shown that young people like to use activities and appreciate the informal learning environment.

The research has shown that more broadly speaking, young people will engage in Cornish if it has an obvious personal benefit to them. In the music CD project young people expressed reasons for getting involved included promoting their band and publishing their music on a CD. If young people see a benefit for themselves, they will engage in it.

It is also noted that Cornish is best received in young communities when its delivery is integrated into existing cultural structures. In the context of the project, the interest in using Cornish in music is a particularly successful fusion of Cornish and an existing popular youth culture, i.e. that of youth music.

## How do we engage young people who do not define themselves as Cornish in language learning and development

This is a difficult one to answer. Cornish language take up will always be a choice until an imperative comes into effect, such as a requirement for employment. One cannot force anyone into language uptake so we must rely on cultural change. Therefore, this will be most effective through peer networks. As shown in the questionnaire, young people will take up the language to support friends and thus having young people to spearhead the introduction of Cornish into young communities is the most appropriate way ahead.

It must be noted that it is unhelpful in some ways to divide young people between the Cornish and non-Cornish as it is more complicated than this. Some non-Cornish young people value the language and some Cornish young people do not wish to be associated with it. This is reflected in the existing language network where some people within the movement are not Cornish but have committed many hours to its promotion and development.

The general youth population will engage in learning that is fun, relevant and interesting to them and their peer groups.

## Where would the best areas be to commence a sustained programme of language and culture development?

Without a doubt schools will play a key part in the learning of the language, but it will be necessary to provide relevance to young people in their general lives. The main criticism we have found from young people of languages in School is that they have no relevance as soon as they leave school at the end of the day, therefore delivering opportunities through youth centres and community groups for engaging in the language outside school will be important.

There is no magic formula for engaging young people and very often tailored responses are required. Many areas of Cornwall have their own particular focus for successful engagement of young people. For example, in Saltash it is music, for Torpoint there is a thriving dance project which could be utilised and is the hub of the

local Youth Forum. These will vary across each area of Cornwall and attention will have to be paid to each of these.

In many respects, the creation of local partnerships would be useful to see how differing groups can deliver cultural development together.

As noted in this report at various points, identifying young people in each area that would be willing to engage in Cornish lessons will facilitate the dissemination of the language through peer networks. It would be advisable to work with local youth services to identify and develop work with those young people who would be willing to engage in Cornish learning.

# How do we best structure campaigns for the maximum engagement of young people?

Structuring campaigns for maximum engagement are about relevance to young people. The question that should be asked is "what do young people want?" It is easy for people to come together and talk about what they think young people want, but it is in engaging the young people directly in strategic development of engagement that success will arise.

Much of the responses about Cornish have been about identity. However whilst many young people identify with Cornish history and heritage, it does not "sell" to them. Campaigns must be modern and desirable. More modern and accessible campaigns around youth culture such as skateboarding, surfing and music culture are ways to engage young people. The majority of young people who were consulted do not feel a link with traditional music or dance so Cornish must come to young people and adapt to modern music and dance. This may mean attention paid to a whole new lexicon for modern times developed in consultation with young people.

Once again there is no easy way to engage all young people. The diverse youth cultures mean tailored interventions may be necessary and this will be ascertained by work within each locality. Some of this work can be expedited through partnership work with youth services.

Cornish language is not in a position to be delivered independently of a wider cultural provision. It must be integrated into a broad curriculum of cultural development to allow for its assimilation into the appropriate cultural systems. In this respect it would be inappropriate and wasteful of resources to create "Cornish Youth Clubs" but a commitment to the inclusion of Cornish in provision through opportunities for its use, bilingual (or even monolingual) signage. The method of language integration into broad curriculum delivery in Livewire has been successful and has created change for young people, the organisational culture and the local community.

Although this project has only been active for 6 months it has changed the culture subtly but considerably. This model therefore can be taken as being successful. This is mainly due to the employment of a worker who uses the language and enables young people through a process of empowerment and confidence building to do the same. It is by allowing the language to live on the tongue that it becomes and remains successful.

#### What sort of approaches to the work would potentially have a greater effect?

Young people have to see relevance to their lives to engage in something. There is a feeling amongst young communities that the overwhelming emphasis on education in their lives detracts from their desire to undertake education outside of the classroom.

Therefore we must be intelligent in how we engage young people. Primarily if we are to engage young people outside of the classroom, we must ensure that:

- It is fun
- It is relevant
- It is beneficial to the young person
- It is achievable

Once again it is in this respect that youth work interventions are appropriate as they are young person focussed. Professional youth workers are experienced in delivering work that has a defined educational outcome but the attention to the process of the work makes it successful for cultural development work such as this.

With the development of accreditation mechanisms this will further encourage young people to take up Cornish as it can comply with the dominant education discourse of accredited attainment whilst maintaining the young person in a process of 'learning by doing'.

In this way it would be suitable to engage other youth groups like the Brownies and the Scouts for this type of work.

#### Recommendations

All of these recommendations will have a financial and resource implication. This research makes no attempt to suggest depth or breadth of delivery as ultimately it will be dependent on the resourcing potential available to the partnership and/or partners.

- 1) Due to the scope and specialised professional nature of the project delivery it would be recommended that the Partnership consider employment of <u>at least</u> one professionally qualified young persons worker. This worker could be employed either internally or externally of the current partnership structure. This person could be responsible for developing any or all of the following action points. The approach, knowledge and understanding of a qualified, professional youth worker are invaluable with regard to the development of projects that attend to youth culture.
- 2) A language resource development package is recommended due to the dearth of existing resources for working with young people outside of formal learning environments. Through the research period all learning resources had to be created or adapted and this took a lot of time. If the pack was created with appropriate media it would need little knowledge to undertake its delivery at its most basic level and would encourage language take up.

Due to the popularity and accessibility of the Activity Award delivered through Livewire to the young people who undertook the language sessions, it is recommended to start by creating and developing a short course language pack for delivery in Informal Education settings. After discussions with the youth service accreditation development worker is it thought that this pack can be accredited by

Cornwall IYSS and could be used in any Informal Education setting in conjunction with the IYSS good practice guidelines. Other accreditation sources would be the ASDAN network, however with existing systems and experience in place within the existing youth services it would make sense to utilise them for this purpose.

3) Raise the profile of Cornish Language work with managers of youth services across the Statutory, Voluntary and Community sectors and push for the inclusion of Cornish language as a commitment within local youth work curricula. The support of the language delivery at a structural level is imperative if the language is to be engaged with at a professional level.

The Cornwall County Council Integrated Youth Support Service has an existing network of youth projects that deliver a broad spectrum of provision to young people across Cornwall and for the largest impact of language uptake outside of school it would make sense to work with the IYSS to develop mechanisms of language delivery through these projects.

This may mean offering training and support packages to existing youth workers within the IYSS around the language which is supported by money for the delivery of language sessions. Alternatively there may be opportunities for people with existing language skills to take up support roles within youth projects after undertaking youth work training.

There are youth work targets for delivering youth work on a wide variety of topics but all are bound by the 5 outcomes in the Government's Every Child Matters framework which are:

- Being healthy
- Staying Safe
- Enjoying and Achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Achieving economic wellbeing

There is an important place within this framework for the Cornish language and culture and could be explored at much greater length and delivered through the statutory service if there were a political and structural will to do so.

- 4) Develop local youth 'peer education networks'. This research has been indicative that the most effective method of language acceptance and integration with young people is through their peer networks. Young people rely on their peer networks for learning, cultural development and the development of cultural norms. This will need the resourcing of development workers in each area to enable this to happen.
- 5) More young person friendly signage and access to relevant dual language information. The more young people are immersed in Cornish, the more they will assimilate it if supported by language learning. This focuses on the idea of making the language relevant to young people.
- 6) Consider partnerships with relevant agencies to deliver appropriate campaigns about modern issues. For instance, working with health promotion agencies, Connexions, housing agencies etc to promote relevant issues bilingually. These are modern topics that will locate Cornish in young peoples thinking and move it away from ideas of Cornish as an old, redundant language.

Whilst some of these topics may seem uncomfortable for many people, they are big issues for young people today and are the main thrusts of the positive development and safety of young people, it is about locating Cornish where young people are.

We are in a consumer age and marketing is very important to young people. To catch the broad range of young people who would not undertake in-depth learning, catch phrases and words are very important.

7) Create partnerships to develop and deliver a Cornish cultural and language young peoples strategy. The reintroduction of Cornish language is not just one of language, but more of developing culture and community. Linguists are not centre stage in this respect. It is the youth workers, the teachers, the community workers, and Councillors who are outside of the linguistic discussions that are critical to ensure the development of the language into young communities. Engaging young people in this process will provide an accurate steer as to the right direction for the strategy to proceed and enhance its success.

A strategy will make it clear what we wish to achieve and set targets that can be worked towards. This will provide an opportunity for group from all sectors to be able understand where we are and where we want to go. This report goes some way to informing the 'distance we can realistically travel' in the near future and can provide a bassline for any targets.

8) Inclusion of young people's representatives on the Partnership. Young people's representation has come a long way over the past decade and it is now widely accepted that the most knowledgeable experts on young people are young people. With the success of Youth Forum and Youth Parliament members, it is a well established understanding that young people are articulate and creative and provide valuable insights into modern life that is often missed by the many people. Therefore I would recommend a space for 2 young people on the Partnership, and/or the funding of a young peoples group, to contribute to the Partnership in decisions relating to youth and community development/intervention issues. It would be essential to see these young people as full members of the partnership with voting rights to ensure their voice was valued.

#### References

Bogdan, R. and Biklen, S. K. (1992) *Qualitative Research For Education* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

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#### Appendix 1 CD Project Feedback Comments

#### In what ways have you personally benefited from the project?

- I have been taking lessons on Cornish
- Built my confidence and showed me the effectiveness of involving different languages in lyrics
- Learnt more Cornish
- My Cornish
- Producing skills in recording and confidence
- Promotion of bands music
- Done recording, live shows line up
- Recorded, gig (hopefully)
- It is our first CD were on so it was a big leap for the band
- Lots
- Promotion

#### In what ways has your band benefited from the project?

- New opportunities
- We broke up....but have all gone in our own directions musically
- We learnt Cornish
- Cornish language
- · Broke up unfortunately, but are doing individual projects
- Great success
- Done recording, live shows line up
- Gig (hopefully), on a CD
- We gained more confidence and more ability to play well as a band
- Recorded on a CD
- Promotion

#### Can you think of anything we can improve on for the next project?

- Nope
- Getting feedback from listeners
- Nope
- No
- Promote bigger/wider
- More time to learn the Cornish
- Live shows to accompany the project
- We get to do 2 songs instead of 1
- Better quality editing (no offence)
- No
- More time to learn the Cornish?

#### <u>Changed how you feel about Cornish – In what way?</u>

- Feel more involved, not just a random language.
- More involvement in the language
- I can use it in songs
- Interesting
- Didn't realise how hard it was
- I am more aware of the language
- It feels more important
- It is an easy language to learn and its similar to other Celtic languages
- Sounds like German

#### Use more Cornish? - Why is that?

- My heritage
- Makes you sound more worldly
- Rob forces me
- Livewire
- Not confident
- I speak English
- Because I don't speak fluently
- Because I cant remember any of it
- To impress my mates
- No need

## Appendix 2 <u>CD Project Evaluation</u>

As you were a part of the first Livewire Cornish Language CD, it would be really useful to know what you thought of the CD project.

Were you aware of Cornish language before the project start?						
	Yes					
	No					
How did you feel about doing the project when you were first asked?						
	Excited					
	Worried					
	Scared					
	Didn't care					
	Confused					
	Intrigued					
	Cautious					
	Pleased					
Do you think the project was successful?						
	Yes					
	No					
In what ways have you personally benefited from the project?						
In what ways has your band benefited from the project?						

project?	can mink of the	at we can improve what we did for the next		
Do you think this is a language?	a good way to g	et young people involved in learning about that		
	Yes			
	No			
Has it changed how	you feel about	the Cornish Language?		
	Yes			
	No			
In what way?				
Do you now use mo	re Cornish Lanç	guage in your everyday life?		
	Yes			
	No			
Why is that?				
		0 110		
Would you like to do	more music in	Cornish?		
	Yes			
	No			
Would you be prepared to use songs in Cornish at gigs and events?				
	Yes			
	No			

#### Appendix 3 <u>Cornish Questionnaire - Personal Attitudes</u>

Thank you for taking part in our research. We are looking at young people attitudes and opinions on Cornish language and culture so that we can offer stuff in the future that is fun, relevant and come from the ideas of young people.

1.	When asked, what do you say about where you come from?				
	I am Cornish				
	I am English				
	I am British				
	I am European				
	Other				
	Don't say				
2.	Do you think it's good to be a Cornish person?				
	Yes				
	No				
	Why do you think that?				
3.	Do you think having your own Culture is important?				
	Yes				
	No				
Why d	o you think that is?				
4.	Had you heard of the Cornish language before this questionnaire?				
	Yes				
	No				
5.	Do you know any Cornish	words?			
	Yes				

	No				
If so, where did you learn them?					
6.	Do you think young people living in Cornwall should learn to speak Cornish?				
	Yes I think it should be composite	ulsory			
	Yes but I think it should be op	otional			
	No they should just speak En	glish			
7.	Do you think that Cornish should only be taught to Cornish people?				
	Yes				
	No				
Why do you think that?					
8.	If your friend wanted to speak	Cornish, what would you think?			
	That was cool				
	They were strange				
	You'd learn a few words to he	elp them out			
	You wouldn't want to be their	friend anymore			
Thank you for taking the time to let us know your thoughts and opinions. Every questionnaire will be read and will go towards letting funders and other groups know how young people feel about Cornish Culture and language. No ones opinion will be ignored they are all equally valuable.					

With huge thanks Rob Reynolds (Livewire Youth Project November 2007)

#### Appendix 4 Comments from Cornish Questionnaire – Personal Attitudes

- 2. Do you think its good to be a Cornish person?
- Because I am proud of who i am and cornwall is a beautiful place.
- Because Cornwall is a nicer place than many others in the UK
- Because your the same as any other person anyway
- Theres nothing to do for young people
- Because its our own countoury
- Because it gives you your identity
- Where you come from is neither a quality or a fault
- Because my whole family is cornish and I have lived in Cornwall all my life
- Because we made the pasty
- Not sure
- Because there is nothing wrong with Cornish people and they have their own language
- Not sure
- Because we don't seem to bo too bad
- Because it gives you an identity
- Not sure
- I prefer the north
- I am cool
- Cos its my heratage
- Because they talk good ie 'trator'
- Because of the lovely surrounding environment in Cornwall
- Because theres beaches
- Good to have regional pride
- Because you have your own personal heritage
- Because it is shit (No)
- Because of stereotypes (No)
- Because it's boring (No)
- Because of pastys
- Because it's a nice place to live and Cornish people are nice
- Because it has good beaches
- Pastys
- I don't think it's a bad thing, however it causes a few problems e.g. having Cornwall
  as its own country
- Because you get some werdos and some cool people (ticked both boxes)
- Coz I do
- There alright
- Because shouldn't be ashamed about where you are from
- Should be proud of where you come from
- Don't have any reason not to be
- Public transport and activities/facilities are not very good in Cornwall that affects how people see you.
- I don't think it matters because where you're from is a minor detail...
- Because it is like being part of Cornwall and a big community.
- Because Cornwall is a very unique area with a lot to give. However I'm not a massive fan of how patriotic some Cornish people can be; and many can be discriminative for tourists and outsiders
- Part of the Community
- Because your part of a beautiful place and community
- Why not, it's a nice place to live
- Lifestyle beaches in the Summer etc independence/identity
- I am not Cornish came here 6 years ago
- No opinion on that as long as you are a good person
- Everyone love to tell you about their childhood holidays in Cornwall

- I think its good to be a Cornish person because everyone is friendly to each other
- Because I'm not Cornish
- You get picked on a lot
- Because its an own contry (well it shud be)
- Beacause it doesent matter wher u really come from
- It does not mater were u r from I not Cornish but live here most of my life
- Because we live near the post and are good people
- Well I'm not Cornish but lived here a lot of my life and I think it's a great place to live and grow up

#### 3. Do you think having your own culture is important?

- It gives you individuality
- So that everybody is different, uniformity is boring
- because it shows personality
- Defines who you are
- Because its a part of who you are
- Because it gives you your identity
- It adds to character
- I class myself as British and being cornish doesnt matter to me
- They way we speak, and the language
- Because we have special events which we think that are good, we have different opinions to other people
- Have your own way
- Don't know
- Makes you unique
- Because it gives you an identity
- To keep your family roots and to appreciate where you come from
- It's good to have your own history
- Everyone needs roots
- So you can believe what you think is right
- Because its a part of your identity and makes you unique
- Umm...
- To understand where you come from why things are the way they are
- Means your closer to your community you have a strong bond
- Shows/reflects personality and background
- Because you are known from somewhere
- Because there are lots of cultures
- Boring
- So you don't lose your roots
- So we are individual
- Because its part of who you are
- It's fun
- It allows you to relate to and with people of similar opinions etc
- Because it makes you who you are
- Coz I do
- Because it is!
- Independence
- Don't have an opinion
- If you want to be involved in a culture yes, but I don't think you have to have your unique culture because it divides people.
- This is difficult to answer as a culture builds up your identity, on the other hand it leads to discrimination.
- For some independents [independence], not just to blend into England
- Being your own person is a good thing, it makes us who we are.
- Something to be proud of

- To be proud of it! And to have something for yourself
- Because I still live in the UK and although it doesn't mean anything to me it may to others
- Something that makes you different in a good way
- For people to have their own identity
- Feel part of something
- Because being individual is good :)
- Not really I go with the flow
- Because it make life more interesting
- So people now were u live and so we are not all the same
- Because it's a difference from others
- Because we do stuff that matter to use
- Because its good to be different and have your own culture
- Because your free to your own choise but is good to follow some so that people (always been here) can't realy complain about how your changing the way the home area is

#### 5. Do you know any Cornish words? If so, where did you learn them?

- At Livewire with Rob in Cornish Lessons
- Rob at Livewire
- Primary School
- Livewire and Primary School
- My uncle, Livewire and my dictionary
- Livewire
- A teacher in Brunel [School]
- Livewire and home
- The cornish shop in liskeard
- From Rob during a Cornish project in Livewire
- Livewire
- Rob and internet
- Livewire
- In a lesson
- From my dad
- Did know some but fogoten, primery school, livewire
- School and Rob
- From Rob and Primary School
- Kernow
- Kernow Cornwall as on the welcome to Cornwall sign
- From surf magazines and friends
- Kernow known in area
- My Dad, my school
- Worked in a Hostel called Benanchy
- Penntor the band
- Shop
- In Cornwall
- Just through people
- Me and my mate made up a word and found it was a word (buggerlugs) (Included for completeness of comments)
- At youth club
- Friends and family
- Dad and other family

#### 7. Do you think Cornish should only be taught to Cornish People?

- We should try to promote Cornwall as a sharing community
- Because it's just silly to disallow people who aren't Cornish from lerning a language
- Anyone should be able to learn it
- It's like saying French should only be taught to French people
- because everyone should have equal opportunity
- Because it would be unfair
- Anyone should have the option, especially seeing as it's part of the nations history and not just Cornwalls
- Because Cornish should be spoken widely, allowing more people to be taught the language.
- [No] because we learn French
- Anyone can if they want to
- Everyone can learn it
- Because it would be silly if Cornish people didnt know thier own language
- It's about choice
- Makes you look smart (good for jokes about non-cornish ppl).
- Because its a good language
- So other people can understand it
- Anyone should be able to learn a bit
- Cornish rules
- for other people to learn
- We get to learn other languages why not cornish
- Because many Celtic languages are similar and widely spoken e.g. Welsh.
- So it can be universal
- Anyone can learn a language if they want to
- I think everybody should have equal opportunities
- You don't have to be French to speak French
- Because people still speak it
- Because they might not wont to or cant because there bad at English (No)
- It's better
- If they want yeah if not no
- So they can get their fair share
- So everyone can learn the culture
- Because people learneg French
- It's a free country
- Because others outside of Cornwall may wish to learn it. Also, it will keep the language going
- Because its interesting so if you want to learn it you should be able to
- Its in the history
- Everyone should know it. Just like French and German.
- Everyone
- I don't believe Cornish should be taught as it's a waste of time for such a small area
- Should be equal opportunities.
- Because if you want to learn it you should be able to.
- Because it is part of are heritage and history
- Because its taking the choice away from individuals
- We don't get stopped from speaking other languages
- Like, different languages, people who are French are not the only people who learn it
- Because people may be interested
- Because its what makes us independent however if people wanted to come to Cornwall they should get taught.
- All young people should be given the opportunity
- It would be good to learn the language of the country-area you live in
- Welsh is learnt in Wales. Gailic in Ireland, its relevant to where we live
- Because it should be known worldwide and recognised

- Because they have a choice to do what they want
- Because anyone might want to come to Cornwall and speak it
- I don't know maybe because its better to.
- I think everyone should learn it
- Because people like the Cornish language like me who would love to learn it!!!
- Beacause any person has the wright to speak whow they like
- I think people should no so we all get a chance
- So we can keep our culture the same and be unique
- Because its like saying Spanish are the only people who should speak spanish

#### Appendix 5

RE: Intercultural event

From: Esyllt Williams (ciwdod@communitymusicwales.org.uk)

Sent: 28 February 2008 10:56:10

To: 'Robert Reynolds' (livewirecornish@hotmail.co.uk)

Cc: 'Gethin Evans' (mentor@communitymusicwales.org.uk)

Dear Rob,

I'm sorry I've not been in touch for some time. Over the last two months we've gone through an organisational restructure, as a result of this I am moving from my post as manager of Ciwdod to heading Fundraising and Development. The new manager of Ciwdod is Gethin Evans, I am passing your details to him and his to you. We are still keen to do something with you and Gethin will work with you on this from now on, as I am still working on Development I will still be involved but in a less hands on way. I am would still like to stress how interested we are in working on this event and on any further relationship we can develop from this.

Gethin is based in our North Wales office in Caernarfon but still covers all Wales, and so it will be no problem to locate the event in Cardiff. His number is 01286 685248 and email is mentor@communitymusicwales.org.uk

I've also copied you in on the email I sent him about the project – which in hindsight is very little use to you as it's all in Welsh! Sorry.

We look forward to working with you.

Diolch.

Esyllt

**Esyllt Williams** Ciwdod

029 2083 8060

www.communitymusicwales.co.uk

www.myspace.com/ciwdod

Appendix 6 – Example of Activity Award Certificate

