

Cornish Language Partnership

Notes of the Forum held 12 July 2006 at New County Hall, Truro, 7.30pm – 9pm.

Chair: Eric Brooke

1. Introduction

EB welcomed all there and introduced the business of the meeting.

2. Presentation

EB gave a presentation on the concept of the Forum and on the Partnership arrangements. JL continued on the progress made and the plans for the immediate future. See appendix to minutes.

3. Discussion

There were interjections during the presentations from two people present, one about the need to 'sort out the language' and nothing else, the other objecting to the use of the term teachers unless they were qualified teachers.

Points raised during discussion were:

3.1 Ian Curnow queried the Memorandum of Understanding and the decision making processes of the Partnership. These were explained and the intention to set up additional topic-based advisory groups which will widen participation.

3.2 Alastair Quinnell said that past CCC involvement in bilingual signage should be carried forward – need something visible. Also a complaint about the Interceltic Watersports brochure, which had no mention of Cornish. EB replied that the language is here to stay, we have the funding and staff and this was a pessimistic view we were hearing. CCC would look at signage when the debate on form was concluded. Loveday Jenkin said she represented Kerrier on the Partnership and that the Partnership had agreed to welcome any bilingual signs in whatever form. There had been problems in Kerrier due to form and therefore a language panel had been set up to look at variations and convergence – it was then up to the parishes to decide if they wanted something different. Bert Biscoe noted that CC have responsibility for town and village signs but no power over what the signs will say. Alan Murphy – signage not the important debate.

3.3 Nigel Hicks – wider cultural issue. UK Government is 2years 3 months late in submission of the compliance report – why? The issue is Cornish and the Framework Convention – Cornish ethnicity. The latest information from ONS re. the 2011 census suggest no demand for a question on Cornish from CCC. *[This was later checked and refuted as both CCC and GOSW have suggested that there should be a question on the Cornish language – JL]*

3.4 Richard Angove – it had been said that experts who expressed a preference would not be included? JL explained that this referred to the Commission with responsibility to oversee the process. There would be opportunities through the linguistic group for all to contribute. RA asked if JL agreed only expert in Cornwall was Jon Mills, with a degree in linguistics. JL declined to agree.

3.5 Richard Williams – problem is the factions. Need outside experts – too much vested interest in Cornwall. JL said that this was exactly what the meeting was discussing – need a mix of external and internal. RW – remember ‘fair play’

3.6 John Angarrack – liberal use of the word ‘expert’. Cf. Scots/Ulster Scots. People overseeing it are not language enthusiasts – they are academics, linguists. Would like to see that in Cornwall. Enthusiasts likely to make mistakes. Noble attempt to reach agreement. However it was felt that the Partnership was tilted in favour of one group. JL said that the skills set for the Commission was under consideration and that she was in touch with Scots/Ulster Scots.

3.7 Ken George – with reference to the translation working party, how many have professional qualifications? JL at the moment only Jori, who had agreed to oversee it. The question of training translators needs to be addressed.

3.8 Ian Curnow – will the external academics be paid for their work? JL yes, but will need to look at budgets.

3.9 Ian Curnow – will the Partnership be able to reject the recommendations? JL – if the process has been rigorous and adhered to, then no as the Partnership will have signed up to that process. If the process was hijacked or misused in any way then yes. Loveday Jenkin – need to work to develop the process for standardisation and to engage with those outside – the usual suspects were there. It’s about the living language, a spoken language – how do you link to those who speak it but are not linguists? Alan Murphy – modern languages teacher. Now learning Cornish and wishes to promote it. Current situation confusing – the sooner there is a standard form the better.

3.10 Phil Rendle. Will information go down to parish level? EB – CLAC represented on the Partnership. JL talking to CALC about distributing the newsletter to parishes.

3.11 Bert Biscoe – need to promote wider use of the language. Move from primary to secondary education takes children to a different context. Huge opportunity through the languages ladder. We should approach the process with a positive frame of mind and a spirit of contribution. Rael Harvey – teenagers are opting out of modern languages – the key is KS1 in primary. JL – entitlement to languages in primary scheduled to come in within the next few years. RH – any of the £600K to be spent on primary. JL – explained that ERDF cannot pay for delivery in schools, but planning covered. RH – would a hard copy of the presentation be available. JL – with newsletter.

3.12 Jerry Jefferies – what about private sector involvement? Bert Biscoe – representing Economic Forum – seeing a growing interest among businesses. Ian Curnow – lack of visibility of Cornish. Good idea to promote better? EB – need to build momentum

3.13 John Angarrack – standard form must be acceptable to HE. Need to get it right. Will there be additional funds to carry out the standardisation? If standard form agreed by May, will text books be ready by September? JL – need timetable to drive the decision-making process. Work goes on at the same time. Funding from within existing budgets – different situation. Bernard Deacon – interesting to hear John Angarrack say it may need more time – remember him complaining last year that it wasn’t moving fast enough. Priority has to be to sort out the orthography. Everything will flow from this – the process is beginning. Give it a chance and be patient.

3.14 JL – pledge to be as open as possible with information. Dedicated website before long – until then will use the CCC website. Regular newsletters. Plea to check back on information rather than react to third hand accounts.

3.15 Forum decisions. Agreed: every three months. Budgets will be transparent and reported on the website.

3.16 Will the final decision be from the experts or the public? JL - Experts will gather evidence and make recommendations. NH – census issues – need CCC to influence it. Audrey Poole – vote of thanks to EB and JL.

Meeting closed 9.05pm