

LANGUAGE SEMINAR: CENSUS RESULTS
Y Ganolfan Porthmadog 20/03/13

Dwyfor Discussion Group Comments

What has changed or not?

What are the reasons for this?

- Need to consider changes on a lower level; changes can happen in small pockets.
- Need to keep an eye on when and how young people use the Welsh language; not only losing contact with the language when they move away, but how they use the language in their own communities.
- Tourism attracting in-migration- this tendency spreading beyond the tourist areas to more rural communities.
- Some parents sending their children to schools that are seen as being more “English”- need for more consistency in education policy and school Governors who are supportive of the Welsh language.
- Influence of the chapel declining- schools now being seen as the main local institutions for promoting the language.
- Affordable housing and lettings policy of key importance in rural areas.
- Decline in the number of older Welsh speakers can change the community’s dynamic. Retired people moving in with spare time to contribute to the community- this can change the language of activities.
- Families important- what language is used in the home? Need more Welsh activities and language support for parents.
- In-migration can challenge organisations and arrangements- e.g. language of Community Councils.
- Welsh speakers need to be more inclusive and also more confident of our language and right to use it.
- Need more economic opportunities- particularly in the private sector.
- Need awareness of language and culture and positive promotion. Councillors with a role to play in this.

- Health: message of “More than Just Words” of key importance.
 - Raise people’s confidence to use the Welsh language publicly.
 - Houses on the open market which get planning permission often become second homes.
 - English used to be seen as the “official” language- elements of this still remain.
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Meirionnydd Discussion Group Comments

What has changed or not?

What are the reasons for this?

- In-migration. Population movement cannot be prevented, but it’s very difficult to respond when a pattern of in-migration has established itself in an area for years.
- Out-migration: The rural economy is weak- world-wide pattern- this leads to out-migration. In Meirionnydd, because of lack of work, the “cream” of the younger generation move to towns and cities to make the most of job and economic opportunities, leading to a lack of young leaders in our communities, young people, vulnerable families and unemployment.
- Lack of confidence. Native Welsh speakers, particularly in disadvantaged areas worrying that their Welsh is “not good enough”. Need to raise the confidence of Welsh speakers who live in Gwynedd (those that remain).
- Gwynedd’s education policy has been successful in developing the Welsh language skills of children and young people. However concern voiced about the differences in the implementation of the policy within some schools. Concern also voiced about the social use of the language on school playing field.
- If the population of Gwynedd had remained the same, the county would have a higher proportion of Welsh speakers, and so the general increase in population has led to the decline.
- Planning and housing of key importance.

- It was noted that jobs are available within the unique landscape of Snowdonia, but that local people do not recognise or take advantage of the opportunities afforded by the landscape.
 - Challenge of bringing the Welsh language and use of it into the business world noted.
 - Need to raise awareness of the language crisis to promote action.
 - The Welsh language needs to permanently be on meeting agendas.
 - Joint working with Snowdonia national Park on planning the future of the Welsh language.
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Arfon Discussion Group Comments

What has changed or not?

What are the reasons for this?

- Y Felinheli – Decline to below ‘70%’
 - Students etc = only half the picture
 - Planning/ housing - Marina (population moving from Bangor)
 - Residential housing
 - Luxury homes = in comers- too expensive for local people
 - Need to consider this in future
- Growth in Botwnnog and Clynnog
 - Is this a direct result of the house building?
 - Do these need to be treated differently? (e.g. wards under 70%)
- Llanrug – increase
 - Houses built = different effect
 - Professional Welsh families- why is this different to Bangor and Felinheli?
- Need work on migration- what are the reasons for this?
- Pentir – surprising it’s not worse, but young people move there and their children learn Welsh. But parents may note that children understand Welsh and their true skills are not fairly reflected.

- Need to look at Bangor in its entirety
 - Education policy
 - Need to change the culture within some schools
- Talybont and Llandygai – considered non-Welsh schools although they are within Dyffryn Ogwen, which has very Welsh areas
- Ensuring homes for local people is a priority
- Bangor houses – many converted to ‘Homs’ (Houses of Multiple Occupancy). Families move out of Bangor because of a lack of appropriate housing.
- Lack of confidence in Welshness in Bangor
 - Need to market the language
 - Many understand the language but don’t use it in Bangor
 - Not seen as something “cool”
- Cyngor Gwynedd – example of living “Welshly”
 - Ynys Môn not the same- many senior officers can speak Welsh but don’t use it
 - Cyngor Gwynedd language policy helps to maintain the level
- Cyngor Gwynedd’s influence is strong in the Caernarfon area
- Organisations based in Bangor should be targeted.
 - They have a settled workforce but not the same commitment e.g. Countryside Commission, health Board, University etc
- Need to differentiate between students and the rest of the population as they skew the overall picture
- Need to create a community of interest e.g. “ Bangor Pride”

- Bangor University – administration – no excuse not to employ Welsh speakers
- Betsi Cadwaladr – Closing services
 - Say this is because of a risk of being unable to find people to work there, but they don't employ locally.
 - Language not considered as part of the recruitment process, so local people have no advantage in applying jobs.
- Perhaps inaction has helped to preserve the situation in Caernarfon and Dyffryn Nantlle
- One risk of increasing skills of local people would be that they would then move away.
- Lack of properties on the housing ladder in places such as Gerlan and Penygroes
- “Sustainable Planning” is needed i.e. where there are enough housing choices for local people.
- Skills
- Clear Welsh- needs to be used
- Cyngor Gwynedd is a good model
- But some instances e.g. ‘Schools Reorganisation’ where people don't understand us.
- In Caernarfon, the schools are “Welsh Welsh” = the population and situation fairly static.
- Language awareness session
- Senior officers in Môn – working in English (although they can speak Welsh)

- Need to insist on speaking Welsh
- In Penygroes – the ‘default’ is Welsh
 - This promotes its use
 - Children who move to the village learn
 - This is very valuable (priceless)
 - We must enthuse
 - Must use every opportunity to use the language
- Need to consider how to target the University
- Need to congratulate the ysgolion Meithrin, as they are making good progress in promoting the language
- We are trying to establish a Menter Iaith in Bangor