

MEETING:	LANGUAGE COMMITTEE
DATE:	7 April 2022
TITLE:	Update on the work of Hunaniaith - Gwynedd's Language Initiative
AUTHOR:	Senior Language and Scrutiny Advisor
PURPOSE OF THE REPORT	This report is submitted in order to provide a background to Committee members about the existing work and priorities of the initiative.

1. Background

- 1.1 The primary purpose of Hunaniaith, Gwynedd's Language Initiative, is to increase opportunities for people to use the Welsh language in all aspects of their lives and in all communities in Gwynedd. This report takes a retrospective look at the past year and presents examples of the officers' work in order to improve Members' understanding of the type of interventions that are planned across the various fields.

2. Overview of 2021-2022 work

- 2.1 As a result of Covid-19, it was decided to continue to provide and develop resources and activities on-line in the main, and seek to provide face-to-face activities when appropriate. Priority was given to activities for children, young people and Welsh learners since this was noted as a priority by the majority who responded to the Hunaniaith questionnaire regarding what should be done to promote the Welsh language in the county.
- 2.2 Continued support was given to encourage and hold activities in the areas selected for targeting before the Covid-19 period, namely Abersoch, Nefyn, Bala and Bangor. Following the publication of 2021 census data on the Welsh language and receiving information on the results of the Ardal Ni 2035 consultation, we will look to identify new areas to target and create a new work programme for the initiative.
- 2.3 After submitting a business case to the Cabinet in November 2021, the Cabinet resolved to approve a commitment of £203,880 from the Transformation Fund, in accordance with the wish of the Hunaniaith Strategic Group, in order to fund an additional full-time post, Hunaniaith Chief Officer, for a 4 year period. The purpose of the post is to lead on the work of establishing the initiative as an independent entity, focusing on attracting new grants and raising income, improving community contact, attracting more community members to the Strategic Group and leading the initiative as a unit within the Council for the time being. The application was approved by the Full Council in March 2022 and consequently, Iwan Hywel was appointed as the Hunaniaith Chief Officer. He will commence in his new post in May.

Specific projects

2.4 Creating new on-line resources and activities

2.4.1 Language Awareness Training Pack

As it was not possible to attend schools to carry out our Language Awareness sessions: *7 Peth Pwysig*; it was highlighted that there was a need to create a digital version of it. To this end, it was resolved to use the Doodle programme and to commission Engan Creadigol to produce the relevant graphics. Before that, there was a need to create a script and storyboard as a way to convey the desired content, and to close, Leisa Gwenllian was commissioned to voice-over the images. A Welsh only version and a subtitled version was shared; as well as a Welsh and bilingual quiz on Kahoot! with Gwynedd schools, the county's youth groups, and on our social media. Very positive feedback was received from the schools - *"I like it very much and it's a very valuable resource to have digitally to present the history and start a discussion with the children. The Kahoot Quiz has also increased enthusiasm...excellent!"* The video can be seen by clicking the following link:

Language Awareness Video: https://youtu.be/f6GI_Oa0C2w

Welsh Quiz Link - <https://kahoot.it/challenge/002104556>

Game PIN: 002104556

2.4.2 Digital Pack 'An Introduction to the Language and Culture of Gwynedd'

On 1 March, a digital pack was launched on the Council's Language Unit website, including a booklet to share with newcomers to Gwynedd and with people who are considering moving to Gwynedd to live. It includes information about the central place that the Welsh language has in the communities of Gwynedd, the advantages gained from speaking the language, a reference to the Gwynedd schools language policy and the support available for children, young people and adults to learn the language. Hunaniaith coordinated and commissioned three videos to complement the booklet with the Snapyn TV company, as follows:

- A taster lesson with Ann Bierd:
Rho gynnig arni: ychydig eiriau <https://youtu.be/f5NceTctfe0>
- *Dysgu a Mwynhau yn Gymraeg:*
Alex's Story <https://youtu.be/5gtitaX0h8>
Carrie's Story <https://youtu.be/yYXFWyZqchl>

2.4.3 'Ar y Llwyfan' series of videos

As a result of the lack of live competitions for two years, it became apparent in conversations with young people that there was a concern about live competing in Eisteddfodau. In discussions with Eryri and Meirionnydd Urdd officers, it was resolved to create a resource to raise the confidence of Year 10 and under 19 year old competitors specifically, namely a series of 3 "masterclass" video shorts entitled "Ar y Llwyfan":

- Recitation with Bethan Elin <https://youtu.be/AbawBqzvGng>

- *Cerdd Dant* with Catrin 'Toffoc' Jones <https://youtu.be/IJX9ZbzipioA>
- Solo Singing with Ffion Emyr <https://youtu.be/Ydbj8lRsyOs>

They were aimed towards competitors in Year 10 and under 19 years; however, the messages of the videos, in reality, are relevant to all competitors. The series was recorded in Stiwdio Sain at the beginning of January by FfotoNant, and they were edited in good time so that they could be shared with Gwynedd schools and *aelwydydd* across Wales before the registration date.

2.4.4 Llwyfan Llŷn

Anni Llŷn, the author and presenter from Botwnnog, has had an aim to establish a stage school in Pen Llŷn for some time. The National Eisteddfod's visit to Llŷn and Eifionydd in 2021 was the incentive that made her seriously move to realise her dream. However, when Covid-19 struck in the spring 2020, the plans had to be put on hold. To prevent the plans from standing still, Hunaniaith stepped in and offered Anni a partnership to start an on-line activity for children in their homes via Zoom. Over the winter in 2020-21 and in the winter of 2021-22, 17 workshops were offered on a Saturday morning on themes that included acting, singing, recitation, dancing and scripting. To date, 35 children have joined the workshops; the majority of them from Llŷn, many from other parts of Gwynedd and a few from Powys.

2.4.5 Video Games Club

Having realised and appreciated the social importance of video games for children and young people, Hunaniaith and the other Language Initiatives in the north came together this year to share skills and duties, and make available the capacity to hold such a popular activity. Apart from the organisational side, the role of the Initiatives' officers has been to fill in the play gaps where needed, but mainly to chat with the players and thus ensure that Welsh is spoken. Here is an example of language planning on a micro level by influencing language practices. Following a very popular initial tournament, regular monthly sessions were held with the 2 age groups: 7-11 and 12-15. It is a process of ongoing learning to improve the provision but those who do attend enjoy it immensely. Here is some feedback from one who has been attending regularly - *"I have enjoyed the session a lot. My sister goes to pony club and I have never really had anything like that, and I have finally found something, and I have really enjoyed it."*

2.4.6 Kahoot Quizzes!

In collaboration with other Language Initiatives in the north, quizzes were created on Kahoot to celebrate Shwmae Su'mae Day, St Dwynwen's Day, Dydd Miwsig Cymru and St David's Day. The schools in the county were invited to join in the fun and they were shared on our social media. The following numbers belong to Hunaniaith only and reflect the need for this type of resource:

- **Shwmae Su'mae Day:** 471 players
- **St Dwynwen's Day** 930 players
- **Dydd Miwsig Cymru:** 1,498 players
- **St David's Day :** 1,011 players

2.4.7 16+ Conference

In collaboration with Sgiliaith, Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, the 4th in a series of conferences were held on the theme *Cymraeg: Cyfle & Cyflog*, to raise awareness of the advantages and value of the Welsh language amongst young people aged 16+, and thus influence their future language use. Focus was placed on students in the digital sector / video games this year, and a series of invited speakers was offered as follows:

Value of Welsh in the Digital World Conference Friday morning, 18 February, Zoom

Opening the conference: Aled Jones Griffith, Head of Coleg Menai a Meirion-Dwyfor
Opening address: Garffild Lloyd Lewis, Gogledd Creadigol
Llywela Owain, Hunaniaith
Pryderi ap Rhisiart, M-Sparc
Orig Jones, Tinint
Owain Saunders-Jones, Atebol
Siwan Owen, Electronic Arts
Guto Rhun, Hansh
Bedwyr Rees, Rondo
Closing address: Paul Edwards, Creative Arts Manager, Coleg Menai

The intention of the conferences is to raise awareness of the advantages of the Welsh language in business, sharing experiences and good practice, and more than anything, be inspiring. 48 attended virtually from the Group's various sites, despite Storm Eunice!

2.4.8 Kariad

One of Hunaniaith's good practices is to offer initial support to freelancers who are eager to deliver a provision that is not yet available in Welsh in the local area. When we heard about Kariad, an innovative project by Karen Wynne, on dealing with loss and change amongst primary aged children, we saw that it would be relevant and beneficial to those who attend the county's language centres.

After meeting with officers from Gwynedd Council's Education Department, we proceeded to coordinate a pilot of an interactive half-day session full of magic at each of our four primary language centres, safely over the internet. A very positive response was received to these activities, so much so that the Education Department has funded more sessions at the language centres for the following term, and they

are eager to extend the provision to the primary schools of the county by including it in their Welsh Language Grant strategy, and that an equivalent provision is offered to the secondary age-groups as well. Hunaniaith is currently commencing the process of facilitating the development of the content for the older age-groups by offering further support to Karen. Here is an example of the feedback received.

2.4.9 Paned a Sgwrs with Welsh Learners in Dwyfor

Every Monday morning since the spring 2020, the Hunaniaith officer in Dwyfor has joined the Paned a Sgwrs sessions with Welsh Learners in Dwyfor via MS Teams. The Welsh Learning service in this area of Gwynedd has facilitated the session since the start of the Covid-19 crisis, and it continues to be a popular event for up to 25 learners every week. Everyone who wishes to join are divided into a number of smaller rooms with the Hunaniaith officer taking the responsibility for 4 or 5 more able speakers to chat for an hour. Hunaniaith has now attended more than 60 weekly sessions and have built a good relationship with tutors and learners alike; a relationship that has led to effective collaboration on other projects such as Teithiau Cerdded Dysgwyr Dwyfor and Dysgwyr Dan Do.

2.5 Re-introducing face-to-face activities

After Covid-19 regulations were eased, we decided to re-commence our face-to-face activities.

2.5.1 Dwyfor and Arfon Welsh Learner Walks

Through effective collaboration with the Welsh Learning tutors in Dwyfor and Arfon, Hunaniaith arranged ten walks in both catchment areas during the summer 2021; **6** in one area and **4** in the other. The essence of each journey was that a local individual had been invited by Hunaniaith to act as a guide on each of the walks. This gave a unique local flavour to each of the walks. It also gave the learners an opportunity to practice their conversational skills, learn about the local history and landscape and to integrate into a Welsh-speaking community.

The walks in Dwyfor visited Rhiw, Llanbedrog, the Tudweiliog and Porth Ysgaden area, Nantmor, the banks of afon Dwyfor and Borth-y-gest. The walks in Arfon visited the town of Caernarfon, Penygroes, Felinheli and Bethesda. We managed to attract very knowledgeable and interesting guides including Gwyneth Glyn, Twm Morys and Rhys Mwyn. As well as these journeys that were held during the week, we had one specific journey on a Sunday in September when Rhys Mwyn took 22 Welsh learners and experienced speakers on a trip to Tre'r Ceiri.

2.5.2 Dro & Jangyl Walking Tours

As a follow-up to the Virtual Conversation Club last summer for learners in the Llanberis area, a local freelance Welsh tutor, Ann Bierd, was commissioned to coordinate and guide face-to-face tours throughout the year (with a last-minute change to hold a virtual session in the autumn, because of the weather). The title,

Dro & Jangyl, was given to the activities to emphasise their informal nature and to provide an opportunity to talk and learn about local landscapes and history.

2.5.3 Fairies Day

On the Saturday closest to Summer Solstice, a walking tour was organised in honour of Fairies (*Tylwyth Teg*) and to acknowledge their importance in Welsh folklore. The majority of the attendees were Welsh first language, with 3 fluent learners. The atmosphere was pleasant with a sense of appreciation of being in a social activity once again. This was the first time for the majority to be in the company of people who were not in their bubble. Covid safety rules were observed at all times, which mitigated concerns and enabled people to enjoy each other's company.

<https://www.facebook.com/hunaniaith/photos/3942951849092418>

2.5.4 Dysgwyr Dan Do

As the weather in the autumn and winter is unpredictable for walking tours, we organised visits for Welsh learners to quirky locations or locations of a historic interest. We visited Yr Ysgwrn at the end of October; a visit that was very popular with the 11 who joined us. At the beginning of December, 14 learners and their supporters visited Storiol in Bangor, but we had to postpone the visit to the Lloyd George Museum in January because of the spread of the Omicron variant.

2.5.5 NATURIOL Welsh Sessions

Catrin Roberts, a freelance Welsh tutor, naturalist and mother to a young child, from the 'Stiniog area was commissioned to plan and lead a series of sessions throughout the year to combine learning Welsh and raising awareness of nature to young children and their adults. The focus of the sessions was nature, history and enjoyment: and syntax and Welsh names were learnt when walking, observing and playing simple games. Positive feedback was received:

"We have really enjoyed the walks, it's helped us with our Welsh, we've learned interesting facts and had a really good time."

"I like the group and Dysgu Cymraeg Naturiol in such an unpressured kind of walk. Hoping to join you again. Thanks."

2.5.6 Nefyn Insect Hunt:

We collaborated with the Llŷn Maritime Museum to arrange many activities for children over the summer. An Insect Hunt was arranged for primary age children in the Museum's meadow on 26.08.21; the Museum is located in an ancient church in the town centre; the meadow is the medieval cemetery. Anita Daimond from [Antur Natur](https://www.facebook.com/anturnatur/) <<https://www.facebook.com/anturnatur/>> came to guide the activity; 11 children from 7 families spent an enjoyable two hours exploring the meadow for invertebrates and arachnids. The afternoon was concluded with puzzles, a quiz and refreshments, all in the outdoors.

2.5.7 **Nefyn in the Age of the Princes**

This bridging period activity was arranged jointly with the Llŷn Maritime Museum on 16.10.21 under the guidance of the archaeologist, Rhys Mwyn. The activity was attended by 18 individuals, 6 children and the rest were individuals, a number of whom did not have children in the activity and who had a desire to enjoy a tour led by Rhys Mwyn in Nefyn.

The activity proved popular amongst the children, their families and other adults. In the future, Hunaniaith and the Museum will collaborate to provide tours, conversations and activities for adults as well as cater for children and young people. The feedback showed that adults, and Welsh learners, have a desire to join Welsh-medium activities that interpret history, heritage and the environment in the context of Nefyn and the vicinity.

Here is some of the feedback received:

'More of this please'

"A worthwhile morning, and very glad that we finally got there! Rhys is fun, likeable, and we are very fond of collaborating with him".

2.5.8 **Deian a Loli Celebration**

This celebration of the incredibly popular children's television series was originally arranged for March 2020, but as with all other arrangements in that fateful month, it was postponed.

Emyr Gibson and Gwion Aled, both of whom are actors with a vast experience of working with children and young people, were commissioned to lead a morning of activities on the theme of Deian a Loli.

The transition period children had an opportunity to practice from scripts from the series and recreate the scenes in front of a green-screen. At the end, the children were able to watch themselves on a digital background of their choice.

2.5.9 **Ceridwen Project Art Workshop**

Branwen Haf Williams was commissioned to lead a workshop to complete a project that commenced just before Lockdown on the theme of Ceridwen. The 4 murals that tell the story of Gwion Bach were skilfully completed by 8 pupils from year 10 at Ysgol Godre'r Berwyn. The final work will be framed and will be available to view opposite the Derek Williams Theatre to welcome audiences to the theatre - another positive step forward following the bleak Covid-19 period.

2.5.10 **Bangor Outdoors Project**

This is a project that aims to work intensively with a small cohort of young people, in order to see whether language patterns and customs can be influenced through regular intervention. The project is led, under commission, by the Urdd's Outdoors Service, and it includes outdoor activities for 15 young people who attend Ysgol Tryfan. It introduces them to new activities and to local history and geography and it raises awareness about employment opportunities in a growth area locally. The

project is coordinated by the Bangor Language Development Centre Officer, who is a member of Hunaniaith staff and is funded by the Bangor Language Initiative. The hope is to apply for a grant to extend the project in the future and offer a place to some pupils from Ysgol Friars.

3. **The future**

The past year has offered new opportunities for Hunaniaith to develop and evolve. With the appointment of a new Chief Officer for the initiative, who will commence in post in May, we can move forward to focus on creating a sustainable future for the initiative as an entity that is independent from the Council.

Over the coming months, we will be addressing:

- the review of the initiative's governance structure and strengthening the community contact
- securing appropriate resources and a regular income stream
- planning a new evidence-based work programme which reflects the wishes of local residents.
- improving our marketing
- continuing to collaborate with others and assist community groups to promote the Welsh language at grass roots level.

4. **Recommendation**

Recommended that the committee accepts and notes the report.