



GPJ/MLW

6 January 2009

Stefan Sanchez  
Clerk to the Committee  
Assembly Parliamentary Service  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CARDIFF  
CF99 1NA

Dear Stefan Sanchez,

**COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO THE PROMOTION OF WELSH ARTS AND CULTURE  
ON THE WORLD STAGE**

I enclose a short contribution on behalf of the Welsh Books Council in the context of the above inquiry.

We would be prepared to present our views in person if the Committee felt that to be necessary. However, we are not requesting this: we would be happy for this written submission to be presented to the Committee and reflected in the Committee's report.

Yours sincerely,

GWERFYL PIERCE JONES  
Director

**Response to Call for Evidence:****Committee Enquiry into the Promotion of Welsh Arts and Culture on the World Stage**

A vibrant, expanding publishing sector is of central importance to disseminating knowledge of Wales and Welsh arts and culture in an international context. Books are an immediately accessible entry point into a country's culture, and are key to the visibility of Wales globally. Publishing provides the backbone for a thriving literature, and the Welsh Books Council's support of publishing and distributing books in all genres, from literary fiction to visual art, therefore makes a critical contribution to the promotion of Welsh art and culture on the world stage.

The Welsh Books Council works closely with other literary and cultural contributors, including Welsh Literature Exchange, the Academi/Arts Council of Wales, the British Council, the National Museum Wales and the National Library of Wales, as well as a wide range of outlets from galleries to bookshops, ensuring that art and literary events and exhibitions are supported and promoted through the book trade.

The publishing sector, and the production, promotion and distribution of books, constitutes a unique intersection between the arts/culture and business, and the arts/culture and tourism, both within Wales and globally. Trade missions and international book fairs, such as the Frankfurt Book Fair, provide unequalled opportunities for strengthening the publishing sector in Wales, and thereby securing the visibility and accessibility of Welsh arts and culture globally. The presence of Wales at the Frankfurt Book Fair, the online bookshop gwales.com, and, until recently, the Welsh Books Council's Overseas Officer, have provided vital links in these relationships.

Currently, the Welsh Books Council's Overseas Officer post remains frozen due to pressure of funding, while last year, due to changes in European funding, there was some doubt as to whether there would be support available from IBW, which would make it possible for Wales to be represented at the Frankfurt Book Fair. In the event funding was available at a reduced level, but the situation is again unclear in 2009.

Safeguarding the promotion of books from Wales at the Frankfurt Book Fair, expanding the presence of Wales to other international book fairs, and renewing and expanding the Overseas Officer role would be an important boost to the development of the publishing sector globally, and by extension, to the accessibility of Welsh arts and culture internationally. Close working relationships between various Departments within the Welsh Assembly Government are essential for the development of the overseas aspect of the Welsh Books Council's work.

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