## Brecon Beacons National Park Authority cid:image001.jpg@01C85148.78775200 Welsh Language Monitoring Report for 2009-2010

**Introduction**

* 1. The Brecon Beacons National Park is one of three National Parks in Wales; it covers 520 miles² and lies between rural Mid Wales and the industrial South Wales Valleys. The National Park has a population of approx 33, 000 people and receives over three and a half million visitors each year. All three of Wales’ National Parks share the same aims:
* to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park, and
* to promote opportunities for the enjoyment and understanding of the special qualities of the area by the public and, in so doing
* to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of the local communities within the Park.
  1. Administratively the area of the National Park includes 50 Community Councils and nine Unitary Authorities. The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority is the planning authority for the National Park with delegated responsibility for rights of way whilst the constituent local Authorities retain responsibility for all other local government services.
  2. Welsh speakers - 15.5% of the National Park’s residents are Welsh speaking and the great majority of the Welsh speakers live in the West of the Park. Indeed some of the communities with the highest percentage of Welsh speakers nationally are within the Park’s Western boundaries (Quarter Bach 75.5%, Cwm Amman 68.5%). The National Park Authority also has a wider catchment area since it’s designation means it is a public resource for the whole population including the Welsh speaking public.
  3. Responsibility for the scheme - The ultimate responsibility for the scheme continues to rest with the Chief Executive of the Authority; however the role of Welsh Language Officer has been assigned to the Communications Manager. She has reconvened the Welsh Language Committee to assist with this role and it includes the nominated “Member Champion” for the Welsh Language.

1. **Compliance with the Welsh Language Scheme**

2.1 **PI1 Front Line Services:** 2 of the 2.5 posts (80%) in the main reception have been designated Welsh Essential and continue to be filled by bilingual staff.

2.2 **PI2 Human Resources Skills**

The Welsh Language Committee recommended a brief survey of staff to ensure that we are recording the full extent that Welsh is spoken by staff within the Authority – the findings of this survey are reported below and are encouraging.

The survey was either emailed or given in hard copy to all staff who were asked to identify themselves as one of the following:

**Non Welsh speaker**- no knowledge of any words or phrases

**Basic**- able to speak and understand some words and phrases

**Learner**- able to understand and converse in simple terms

**Intermediate**- Can converse in Welsh with reasonable confidence and occasional detailed terms.

**Fluent**- Able to converse in Welsh with confidence, using detailed and complex terms with ease.

Results: As of 31 March 2009 the Authority employed 115 staff (some restructuring and non-replacement of staff has reduced the numbers on the previous reporting year) and 98 responded to the survey – results are below

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Non Speaker | Basic | Learner | Intermediate | Fluent | Unknown | Qualifications |
| Number of individual staff | 24 | 35 | 16 | 10 | 14 | 16 | 23 Staff between them hold the following qualifications  7 x O levels, 20 x GCSEs 1 x AS level, 3 x A levels, 1 x Degree |
| % of staff total | 20.9% | 30.4% | 13.9% | 8.7% | 12.2% | 13.9% | 20% of staff have a qualification |

This represents a considerable improvement on last year’s report with 20.9% of staff describing themselves as either intermediate or fluent and able to converse in Welsh. Encouragingly 65.2% of staff are able to use at least some Welsh in their dealings with the public, with only 20.9% identifying themselves as complete non speakers – 30.4% of the rest could manage at least some basic introductory words.

Ten members of staff within the Authority’s services regularly received Welsh language training during the reporting year. They followed the Welsh for Adults courses taught at three different levels (beginner, intermediate, advanced) during work hours at the Authority Headquarters in Brecon. The course is advertised to new recruits during their induction and also to existing staff at the beginning of each term. Staff who are not based at the HQ in Brecon are also given the opportunity to attend the course.

**Language awareness training:**

**2.3** The majority of our staff received language awareness training during their induction. All new staff are advised of the Authority’s Welsh Language Scheme as part of their induction process and are also advised that they can join the Authority’s language lessons if they wish.

**Staff Recruitment**

Three staff were recruited during the reporting year and two of those were fluent Welsh speakers .

2.4 **3 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

PI3: Human resources – equality and diversity

The number and percentage of staff within the Authority’s services able to speak Welsh according to:

1. Service division:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Planning  (26 staff) | Non Speaker | Basic | Learner | Intermediate | Fluent | Unknown |
| Number of individual staff | 3 | 8 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| % of staff in directorate | 11.5% | 30.8% | 11.5% | 11.5% | 15.4% | 19.2% |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Countryside  (66 staff) | Non Speaker | Basic | Learner | Intermediate | Fluent | Unknown |
| Number of individual staff | 11 | 21 | 9 | 6 | 8 | 10 |
| % of staff in directorate | 16.6% | 31.8% | 13.6% | 9.1% | 12.1% | 15.2% |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Business and finance  24 staff | Non Speaker | Basic | Learner | Intermediate | Fluent | Unknown |
| Number of individual staff | 10 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| % of staff in directorate | 41.7% | 16.6% | 16.6% | 4.2% | 8.4% | 12.5% |

Planning have 26.9% staff identifying themselves as able to converse and countryside have 21.2%- both well over the national average The Welsh speakers in countryside tend to be in posts targeting the particularly Welsh speaking populations in the Park – for example most of the Welsh Speaking Wardens are based in the West of the Park. The service departments have a lower ratio – 12.6% - these staff however work in jobs facing the public.

(b) Post grade

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| GRADE | Non Speaker | | Basic | | Learner | | Intermediate | | Fluent | | Unknown | |
| **1 – 8**  *(61 staff)* | 8 | % | 16 | 27.11% | 8 | 13.6% | 6 | 10.2% | 9 | 15.3% | 12 | 20.3% |
| **9 -12**  *(40 staff)* | 10 | 25% | 12 | 30% | 8 | 20% | 1 | 2.5% | 5 | 12.5% | 4 | 10% |
| **12+**  *(14 staff)* | 6 | 50% | 4 | 28.6% | 0 | 0% | 2 | 14.3% | 0 | 0% | 2 | 14.3% |

(c) Workplace:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Non Speaker | | Basic | | Learner | | Intermediate | | Fluent | | Unknown | |
| HQ  *(80 staff)* | 19 | 23.8% | 21 | 26.3% | 12 | 15% | 8 | 10% | 7 | 8.8% | 13 | 16.3% |
| Wardening service  *(15 staff)* | 1 | 6.6% | 5 | 33.3% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 3 | 20% | 6 | 40% |
| Visitor Centre  *21 staff* | 4 | 19% | 7 | 33.3% | 4 | 19% | 2 | 9.5% | 4 | 19% | 0 | 0% |

The figures show that 18.8% of the staff in HQ feel able to converse in Welsh, while an even higher 38.5% of Visitor Centre Staff are able to converse in Welsh with a further 52.3% can at least greet visitors in Welsh before switching to English. The warden service has 20% speaking Welsh fluently and all of these wardens work in the West of the Park where the majority of Welsh speaking residents are.

PI4: The standard of Welsh language services

The number of complaints received in relation to the operation of the Language Scheme and the percentage dealt with in accordance with the Authority’s corporate standards.

Number of complaints received: 0

Complaints about lack of Welsh language services are received seldom

The complaints process is presented in a leaflet on the website in English and in Welsh however the new website will make this even clearer. Currently complainants are invited to choose whichever language they prefer to express themselves. The Language scheme itself is also published on the website.

**4. Visitor publications**

The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority produces a number of publications which are distributed through its visitor centres. The main publications are listed below :

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Title** | **Language** |
| **Brecon Beacons National Park - Retail Publications: 2009** | | |
| 1 | Explore Llandovery | Bilingual |
| 2 | Waterfall Country | bilingual - 10,000 copies |
| 3 | The Sugar Loaf from Abergavenny Walk | Bilingual |
| 4 | The Beacons Circuit Walk | Bilingual |
| 5 | Map & Poster | Bilingual |
| 6 | Llanfoist Wharf from Abergavenny Walk | Bilingual |
| 7 | Pen y Fan and Cribyn from Cwm Gwdi Walk | Bilingual |
| 8 | Wildlife Walks | Separate English and Welsh versions |
| 9 | What to see from the Mountain Centre on foot | English only |
| 10 | The rise and fall of Penwyllt | Bilingual |
| 11 | Walks from the Mountain Centre | English only – old booklet we are using up –not expecting to re-print |
| 12 | ­Audio Trails | Recorded in original language with translation available. |
| 13 | The Pocket Guide | 50,000 English, 1,000 Welsh |
| 14 | Explosive Times – comic book | 20,000 bilingual copies |
| **Tourism 2009-10 - free publications** | | |
| 1 | 2x newsletters | Bilingual twist & turn |
| 2 | beacons bus timetable | separate leaflets English & Welsh |
| 3 | Offas Dyke Flyer | Separate leaflets English and Welsh |
| 4 | Blaenavon Bus | reprinted bilingually |
| 5 | Weekday travel guide bus timetable | bi lingual |
| 6 | Car Free Days Out – History and Heritage | bilingual |
| 7 | Car Free Days Out Parks and Picnics | bilingual |
| 8 | Car Free Days Out Caches and co-ordinates | bilingual |
| 9 | Family walks by bus | bilingual |
| 10 | Stay Somewhere Green | mono-lingual English - marketing material aimed at English speaking audience in England |
| 11 | Cycling leaflet | Bilingual |
| 12 | Mountain Biking leaflet | Bilingual |
| 13 | Fishing Leaflet - reprinted | bilingual twist & turn |
| 14 | Visitor Guide | Bilingual cover and intro also info on Welsh lang – body of text in English |
| 15 | Tourism Conference Flyers | bilingual |
| 16 | Green Tourism Flyers | Separate English and Welsh |
| 17 | Training Courses for tourism businesses leaflet | Bilingual twist & turn |
| 18 | Gorge Walking code of conduct | Bilingual |
| 19 | Tourism operators training course | Bilingual |
| 20 | Bwlch with Altitude leaflet and challenge | Bilingual |
| 21 | Ride Brecon Beacons | Bilingual |
|  | **Geopark** |  |
| 22 | Geopark general leaflet | separate leaflets English & Welsh |
| 23 | 2 x Newsletter | bilingual twist & turn |
| 24 | Geopark festival flyers | Separate leaflets English and Welsh |

Of the publications **for sale,** 12 out of 14 (84%) are either bilingual or available in separate Welsh and English versions. Of the 24 publications which are **available free** to visitors, 21 (87.5%) are either bilingual or available in separate Welsh and English versions. For the first time in 2009/10 one of the main free publications - The Visitor Guide – had a bilingual cover and introduction, as well as a section on the Welsh language, introducing the Visitor to the Welsh alphabet and to some useful Welsh phrases. At the request of the Welsh Language Board we are looking at how we can offer even more of the Visitor Guide in Welsh language next year – we are faced with some issues in relation to this request:

* We do not have the resources to print more of the guide nor change its size
* many of the pages are paid ads with artwork provided by the advertiser usually only in English as the ads are small,

we will be discussing how to approach translation for it with the Board – however it is our intention to maximise the presentation of the Welsh language within it.

Welsh Translators – All staff have now been appraised of the requirement of the act to use translators registered with the Board and only exceptions we have made to this are for the translation of technical geological terms for example where we are using a specialist – we can provide further details should these be required.

**5. Local Development Plan and National Park Management Plan**

The Local Development Plan (LDP) is now in its draft deposit stage and out for public consultation – it will governs development in the Park for the next 15 years, includes the need to conserve and enhance the cultural richness of the National Park. The LDP supports the use of Welsh Language in the park through the following policy

Policy 34     - Welsh Language

*Proposals for development in areas where the Welsh language is an important part of the culture and social life of the community will be permitted where:*

*i)          it can be demonstrated that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the social, linguistic and cultural characteristics of the community; and*

*ii)         phasing of development can take place if necessary to allow for the gradual absorption of new development.*

The Authority’s National Park Management Plan is now completed and too that will be published in Welsh as well as English.

**Grant in Aid**

The Authority manages a Sustainable Development Fund on behalf of WAG and one of the 6 core criteria used at interview panel for judging the project is whether the project “Treats English and Welsh on a basis of equality in its dealings”. Projects have to meet all of the core criteria in order to obtain funding.

**6. Areas for improvement**

6.1 Website: During 2009-2010 the English version of the website was updated and it is our policy to have the whole website up to date and published in Welsh but at the moment the Welsh section of the site is not of an appropriate quality – accordingly we have for now removed the Cymraeg button from the front page. We are in the process of overhauling the website and ensuring it is properly translated – you can see where we are at the moment and monitor the work in progress at <http://www.bannaubrycheiniog.org>. Unfortunately we are not currently providing the service we would like to - we intend to have the site fully translated during this financial year

6.2 Mainstreaming Welsh Language and monitoring – based on last year’s report the Language Board asked us to provide more information on how we are “mainstreaming” the Welsh Language and monitoring our progress These issues will be put before the new Welsh Language Committee and we will give the Board information about our proposals around these when the Committee has agreed them.

**7. Conclusion**

7.1 Brecon Beacons National Park Authority is committed to treating the Welsh and English languages on a basis of equality, and to contributing to the Welsh Assembly Government’s action plan for a bilingual Wales.

7.2 Within the Authority itself, we will continue to promote the Welsh language and will encourage existing staff to learn Welsh. We will continue to recruit bilingual staff to those posts we consider to be “Welsh essential”.

**8. Publication of information on performance**

It is the Authority’s intention to publish this monitoring report and the Board’s response to it on our website.

**Appendix A: Responses to the Welsh Language Board Response, January 2010**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Section** | **Comments** | **Brecon Beacons Response** |
| **Introduction** | |  |
| 1.2 | It is noted in the report that the ability to speak Welsh among residents of the Park area range between 0 and 10% in the east to between 20 and 30% in the west. However, the Welsh Language Scheme (the Scheme) itself recognises that there are areas within the Park where Welsh is spoken by many more than that, indeed some of the communities with the highest percentage of Welsh speakers nationally are within the Park’s boundaries (Quarter Bach 75.5%, Cwm Amman 68.5%). The Welsh Language Board’s (the Board) statistics show that on average 15.5% of the population speak Welsh, or 4,903 people according to the 2001 census. It is vital that the Authority is aware of these numbers and that consideration is given to the aspirations of the community in providing services. | I can confirm that the Authority is indeed aware of these numbers – there is no disagreement between your figures and ours – the average in both is approx 15% for the population as a whole but it makes the point that  The numbers quoted in the original report were taken directly from the Welsh Language Board’s own website |
| **Compliance with the Welsh Language Scheme** | | |
| 2.2 | It is good to see that the Authority provides Welsh lessons that are open to all staff. Perhaps the Authority may wish to consider target training to those staff that frequently come into contact with the public, identifying the skills and training required as part of routine evaluation. | The Authority is keen to continue to offer training to all staff – but we have been considering how to address the issue of providing Welsh speakers for the public. |
| 2.3 | It is good to see that language awareness is a component of the induction programme. |  |
| 2.4 | It is noted in the report that no candidate requested a Welsh job application pack, even though the website and advertisements state that they are available.  On visiting the website, there is no option on the Welsh home page to look at ‘Vacancies’. Where ‘Vacancies’ appears on the English home page, ‘Ffeithiau a Ffigyrau’ or ‘Facts and Figures’ appear on the Welsh home page. Even accessing the ‘Vacancies’ page from the English page and then clicking on the Welsh option, information is presented in English. Nowhere does it state that Welsh application packs are available.  For the public to use Welsh language services, those services must be equally accessible and of the same standard as the English language service. The public cannot be expected to use Welsh language services if they have to check that the information provided is as comprehensive as the information provided as in English. | We are now having the whole website translated and our web designers have hired an employee who is qualified with the Board of Translators to help edit the welsh web pages to we hope to address these issues fully. |
| **3. Performance Indicators** | |  |
| PI3 | The number of staff who speak Welsh is extremely low, with the percentage significantly lower than the percentage of the park’s population that speak Welsh. With many of the Park’s communities and neighbouring communities consisting of a high percentage of Welsh speakers, the Authority must consider the aspirations of the wider population. The Park is within just one hour’s drive of the 2 million (approx) people who live in South Wales, the area where the majority of the Welsh speaking population reside [source: The Impact of Leisure and Tourism on the BBNP – Colette Mooney, Education Officer].  It is a concern that the visitor centre and information centre have no Welsh speakers. Given the contact that these centres have with the public, the Authority should ensure that service can be provided in Welsh if it is requested. Recently, the Board published a guidance document ‘Recruitment and the Welsh Language’. It gives guidance on how to assess whether linguistic requirements should be placed on vacant post and if so, how to follow good practice in recruiting to the post. | This is addressed in this year’s report |
| PI4 | Although there exists a bilingual explanation form on the website on how to submit a complaint, no Welsh forms exists to submit a complaint. | See earlier remarks about the web |
| **4. Visitor Publications** | |  |
|  | The Scheme states  *‘When the Authority prints and publishes material for the general public, it will do so bilingually.’*  The only exception to this clause relates to circumstances when, for ease of use, Welsh and English publications are published separately. The Board therefore expects that all publications, including one of the main free publications ‘The Visitor Guide’ to be published in accordance with this principle. | This is an area where we would welcome further discussion in order to deliver what you require. |
| **6. Areas for Improvement** | |  |
| 6.1 | The Scheme states  *‘The Authority will ensure that Welsh and English are treated on an equal basis in relation to its Information Technology systems. The Authority will use as much Welsh as is reasonably practicable on its website with the aim of becoming fully bilingual.’*  The Scheme has been in operation since December 2006, so it is reasonable to expect that the Authority should reach its aim of becoming fully bilingual in providing IT services. However, from looking at the website it is immediately apparent that this aim has not been achieved. In fact the majority of pages remain in English only.  The Board has developed guidelines to assist organisations in providing IT services. Please refer the enclosed documents to the relevant officers within your organisation   * Welsh Language Board Bilingual Software Standards * Implications of Web2.0 Bilingual Websites – Towards Best Practice | See 2.4 above |
| 6.2 | Please provide further explanation of the problems that you are experiencing in ensuring that your translators are members of the Association of Welsh Translators. | Happy to do so. |
| 6.3 | The Authority’s proposal to resurrect the working group that supports the implementation and monitoring of the Scheme is welcomed. Please provide further information about its role, structure and membership. | This is now active and had met five times so far. |
| **Welsh Language Board General Comments** | |  |
| Revision of the Scheme | Typically, Welsh Language Schemes are in operation for a period of 3 years before they undergo a revision process. The Authority’s current Scheme was approved in December 2006 and so it is timely that the Authority now revises the Scheme and that it creates new targets and a new timetable. The Board shall contact the Authority shortly to arrange a meeting to discuss our expectations of a revised scheme. | We would welcome the opportunity to revise the scheme. |
| Procurement / Contractors | The Scheme commits the Authority to take a series of steps to ensure that services provided on its behalf by other parties comply with the requirements of the Scheme. Future monitoring reports should clarify the Authority’s current position in this context and, if necessary, present a programme for ensuring future compliance with the requirements. The Board will be publishing guidance on this matter in the spring. | As far as I know we have not had this guidance – if it is available perhaps you could send it to me. |
| Grant Aid | An explanation should be offered of how the Authority ensures compliance with this clause of the Scheme. The Scheme’s target states that a standard question is included on all application forms for grants that require applicants to explain how they intend to consider the requirements of Welsh speakers. | Noted for this year’s report |
| Main Streaming | The Scheme states that the Authority will take a number of steps to ensure that the Welsh language is main streamed into its policies, services and initiatives. Future monitoring reports should explain the steps taken to ensure compliance with this clause. For example, a number of authorities have reported that questions relating to the Welsh language have been included in the in equality impact assessment toolkits, with the assessment’s findings monitored by individuals or groups with expertise in the field. In addition, some authorities provide a list of policies and initiatives that have been subject to assessment. | Thank you for this clarification. |
| Quality Standards | Has the Authority undertaken to monitor the quality of the Welsh language service provided (risk assessment, internal verification checks, mystery shopper exercise etc). Although the number of complaints received was reported upon, the historical unavailability of Welsh language services by public bodies means that a low level of complaint does not equate to satisfaction with service provision. | We do not currently have a method for assessing this but the newly reconstituted Welsh Language Committee will consider what we can do. |