

CYNGOR LLYFRAU CYMRU WELSH BOOKS COUNCIL



National Year of Reading 2008

**Internal report commissioned by the
Welsh Books Council**

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Executive Summary

(The numbers in parentheses indicate the relevant sections of the Report that deal with the subject)

1. 2008 was designated a National Year of Reading in Wales as well as in England. The Welsh Assembly Government provided funding for a multi-faceted campaign to promote books and reading in Wales (section 1).
2. The Welsh Books Council was commissioned to lead that campaign and its remit (section 2) was to:
 - Lead and coordinate a national campaign to promote reading, developing and managing events based around three core themes –
 - ‘Give a Book Week’ (section 5.1);
 - ‘Reading Communities’ (sections 5.2);
 - Establishing 50 Reading Clubs targeted at early teenage boys (section 5.3);
 - Developing and maintaining a National Year of Reading Website (section 8);
 - Conducting a wide-ranging publicity campaign (section 7);
 - Creating working partnerships with a range of organisations across Wales that would promote reading (section 6);
 - Organising an end of year Conference to reflect on achievements;
 - Commission an end of year Report that would reflect on achievements and evaluate the work undertaken

This Report concludes that the Welsh Books Council successfully delivered its remit in each of these areas.

3. The remit was to be placed in a particular context (section 3) – sustaining recent improvements in the reading abilities of children and adults, promoting reading among teenage boys and developing life skills among adults on the basis of improved reading abilities. In addition, the work was expected to promote reading as a pastime and in the context of workplace skills, to promote reading among groups and communities considered as disadvantaged or difficult to reach, and extending the use of technology in order to promote reading.
4. A national Steering Group established the primary aims and objectives and approved the main components of the campaign. A coordinating team was established within the Welsh Books Council comprising a National Coordinator and an Administrative Assistant (section 3.2, 3.4 and 3.5).
5. Welsh local authorities were invited to become the primary partners in the campaign and each authority appointed local coordinators. An extensive programme of activity was offered by each authority utilising all the relevant specialisms in the area of promoting reading and providing book-based services at their disposal (section 3.6 and 4).
6. The three specific elements of the campaign (section 5) were managed in different ways with the central coordinating team providing substantial support and assistance. The

'Give a Book Week' was managed centrally by the coordinating team and the Welsh Books Council together with Golley Slater, public relations and publicity specialists. The 'Reading Community' component was open to competition among Welsh local authorities and was based at Barry in the Vale of Glamorgan, and at Llanelli in Carmarthenshire, with support from the central coordinating team. For the 08 Reading Clubs campaign national Coordinators were appointed as well as five regional coordinators and they were supported by the national coordinating team, with the leadership of the Clubs vested in voluntary club Leaders.

7. Targets were set by the Welsh Assembly Government in respect of the campaign (section 3.3) – to organise 2,008 events and to establish 50 Reading Clubs with a total of 500 members.

By December 2008 the target of 2,008 events had been exceeded with the total number of events organised being 2,509.

50 Reading Clubs with more than 500 members were established.

8. Levels of public participation were high (section 4.1) – average attendance at events throughout Wales was nearly 44 persons, and it is possible to calculate that at least 106,000 people participated directly in the events and campaigns organised during the Year.
9. Levels of public satisfaction (section 4.1) with the content and quality of events were also high – 93% indicated high levels of satisfaction, and the only minor criticism expressed came primarily from the fact that the events were too popular or too well attended. Similar high levels of satisfaction were expressed in terms of administrative arrangements.
10. Evidence was gathered that indicates that participants in the Year's work derived considerable benefit (sections 4.2, 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.2.3 and 6)
 - the public found the programme of activity innovative, stimulating, even life-changing;
 - organisers gained valuable experience and additional skills by developing and delivering an ambitious programme of events;
 - participating organisations, such as public libraries and other groups, experienced significant increases in the demand for their services.
11. The publicity campaign (section 7) comprised a number of elements
 - creating a brand and an image – more than one and a half million items of materials were distributed bearing the brand and logo of the Year's work;
 - promoting public awareness by projecting the National Year of Reading at national events and via national advertising – more than 1,400,000 people would have been alerted to the Year's work by the campaigns undertaken;
 - promoting the Year's work in the press and the media – a potential audience of more than 8.5 million readers was alerted to the National Year of Reading by means of the

press and publicity campaigns coordinated by Francis Balsom Associates (FBA) on behalf of the Welsh Books Council, the publicity gaining advertising value estimated at £467,303. In addition, materials placed with broadcasting media and a range of other publicity outlets had a potential audience of 5.4 million.

12. The 'Give a Book Week' campaign (section 5.1) which launched the National Year of Reading activity in Wales itself generated publicity worth £38,000, with a PR value of more than £113,000.
13. The National Year of Reading website (section 8) proved to be a valuable facility and generated some 800,000 hits between May and December 2008. Its role as a medium to disseminate and collect information, promoting events and developing ideas as well as augmenting specific programmes of activity was significant.
14. Partnership working was a very prominent feature of the Year (section 6). The local authorities were the primary partner, but existing partners who have worked in the past with the Welsh Books Council made substantial contributions, including trade union organisations, and new partnerships were established in the voluntary and charitable sectors, and with commercial and specialist organisations. It was through partnership working that the Year was able to develop its more innovative and challenging work and increase its social diversity and relevance, and to work with groups and communities traditionally regarded as being difficult to reach.
15. The assessment of the value for money aspect of the National Year of Reading 2008 (section 9) concludes that for a range of reasons, the value for money obtained was excellent.
16. The legacy of 2008 (section 10) is considerable:
 - the impact on the public has been significant as the levels of participation reflect;
 - levels of satisfaction have been high among participants and public expectations have been heightened;
 - life-changing evidence has been identified;
 - organisational skills and abilities have been developed and refined, and successful and sustainable management and operational models for different kinds of reading campaigns have been identified;
 - very many of the Year's partners have indicated their intention to continue to work on important campaigns and initiatives.

In addition, important guidance for future activity has been obtained:

- a longer period of preparation for a National Year of Reading is required;
- the budget level for 2008 constrained activity to an extent, and
- concentrated campaigns held over a short but appropriate period in the Welsh cultural and social calendar appeared to be a favoured model

On the basis of the evidence provided, the National Year of Reading 2008 has been a considerable success, and it is essential that its successes should provide the foundations for continuing programmes and campaigns to promote reading

- the 'Give a Book Week' campaign should become a central feature of the annual World Book Day in Wales. As an event it has the capacity to generate substantial publicity and media attention. A suitable budget should be made available to that end;
- the 'Reading Community' model should be extended to at least one local authority each year and a suitable budget should be made available for the purpose. Each participating authority should also be encouraged to continue with a programme of reading events based on the 'Reading Community' model in subsequent years;
- the 08 Club model was so successful that it should be extended throughout Wales, and the organisational model retained and supported.

In each instance the support of a small central coordinating team is a necessary prerequisite.

1. Purpose of the Report

This Report was commissioned by the Welsh Books Council. Its purpose is to evaluate the achievements of the National Year of Reading in Wales 2008 and the work undertaken by the Welsh Books Council and the large number of partners who contributed to the programme of activity, with the intention of presenting it at an end of year Conference during February 2009.

It is possible to select approaches to the task of evaluation from a range of methodologies that are available. Using some approaches would be inappropriate. Even though a National Year of Reading was held a decade ago, it would not be possible to compare the content and nature of the work programmes as the approaches adopted for each were significantly different, even though the overall aims and objectives were the same. In addition, as this Report will indicate from time to time, a number of the outcomes of the National Year of Reading in 2008 will emerge gradually over a period of time and not necessarily in the short term. It would not be appropriate therefore to arrive at specific conclusions about certain core outcomes at the present time, as it would be premature to do so.

Nevertheless, as it developed its plans for the National Year of Reading, the Welsh Books Council sought to ensure that evaluative mechanisms were put in place that would facilitate the evaluation process at the end of the Year. Such a requirement was stipulated for each and every aspect of the programme and for the specifically commissioned components of that programme, and questionnaires and other data-gathering mechanisms were developed to be used for the whole Year's work. In addition, the main partner in the Year, the local authorities, already have data-gathering routines and practices in relation to their own work and services, and they include gathering public opinion and responses, and a number of local authorities used those methods in respect of their contributions to the Year. However, it is important to note that some of the activities placed almost exclusive emphasis on promoting reading and books through informal means, and in those circumstances setting up a formal response mechanism and placing an administrative burden on organisers and participants was deemed to be inappropriate as it would have created an unfortunate and overly formal image for the work.

As many of the activities of the National Year of Reading took place in the second half of the Year, and as some of the activities continued into the early months of 2009, it was inevitable that this Report would have to be compiled during the period when some of the evidence that would facilitate evaluation was still being compiled and collated. That could have placed certain constraints on the evaluative process and on the nature of the conclusions that could be drawn within a specific time frame, but in the opinion of the author of this Report, enough evidence was already available to provide a sound and robust foundation for the evaluation process and for the conclusions and inferences arrived at. The contribution of all parties who have contributed to the work of collecting and collating evidence needs to be acknowledged, especially those who submitted their evidence very promptly.

A further Report has been commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government, a Report that will evaluate the manner in which the Year of Reading and the associated work programme was conducted and delivered. Specifically that Report is to '*undertake an evaluation of the implementation of the National Year of Reading 2008 and its associated activities*', and work on that Report will extend over a slightly longer time period than was possible for this Report.

Therefore this Report will concentrate on:

- considering whether the tasks allocated to the Welsh Books Council by the Welsh Assembly Government were duly completed;
- considering whether the specific targets set for the National Year of Reading by the Welsh Assembly Government were achieved;
- considering whether the aims and objectives set for the Year have been met;
- tracing the methods used to promote social inclusion in the promotion of reading and to address the challenge offered by deprived communities and difficult to reach groups;
- considering the levels of public participation in Wales in the work of the Year – the quantitative aspects;
- considering the satisfaction levels achieved among participants in the events of the Year in Wales – the qualitative aspects;
- considering whether the Year's events and the manner in which they were managed offered value for money;
- considering the Year's legacy in terms of establishing good practice of substantial or long-lasting value in the context of promoting reading and books, and considering whether any recommendations can be made on the basis of the Year's work in 2008 and from the experience gained from managing its events.

2. The background

2008 was designated a National Year of Reading in Wales as well as in England. The decision to base the work on the 2008 calendar year was made initially in England, rather than using the financial year 2008–09 or the 2008–09 academic year which might have had certain merits. As a consequence the time available to prepare, plan, formulate and deliver events and activities was restricted. The implications and consequences of that decision will be alluded to at various points in this Report, but at the outset it is appropriate to state that should a further National Year of Reading be contemplated in the future, key decisions should be taken and preparatory work should commence twelve months in advance.

Financial resources amounting to £350,000 were awarded to the Welsh Books Council over two years, together with an additional sum of £117,000, by the Welsh Assembly Government to enable the Council to lead and coordinate the national campaign in Wales that sought to promote reading, with a particular emphasis being placed on the promotion of reading among young people. The Council had to move very quickly following the award of the resources, and did so with the assistance of a Steering Committee. Specifically, it was agreed that the campaign should concentrate on a number of activities:

- Leading and coordinating a national campaign to promote reading in Wales in 2008, and developing and managing events based around three core themes:

- Organising and delivering a 'Give a Book Week'
 - Organising and delivering a 'Reading Communities' campaign, working in two selected communities in collaboration with two local authorities, with the choice of the authorities based on a competitive selection process, with the winners being awarded the resources earmarked for the campaign;
 - Establishing 50 Reading Clubs – 08 Clubs – across Wales, giving particular attention to work with boys at a certain stage in their educational career, a reading community that is often regarded as reluctant or difficult to engage;
- Developing and maintaining a website devoted to the National Year of Reading. It was considered that such a website could augment and support the Year's events and campaigns, and offer a means of developing additional ways of creating an interest in and contributing to the promotional campaigns that were to be integral parts of the Year's work;
 - It was generally accepted that generating publicity for the National Year of Reading on all possible media was among the roles and functions allocated to the Welsh Books Council;
 - Organising an end of year Conference during February 2009 in order to review the Year's work, and to provide an opportunity to reflect on the good practice and valuable experience that accrued during 2008;
 - Creating key partnerships with a range of organisations across Wales in order to create and deliver a programme of activities that would promote reading;
 - Commission an end of year Report that would reflect on and evaluate the achievements of the National Year of Reading 2008. That Report is presented here. For reasons already stated, it is probably not possible to regard this Report as a final and definitive Report on the Year's work and achievements, but it seeks to be a major contribution to the necessary evaluative process.

3. The context

Ten years have passed since the previous National Year of Reading in Wales was held in 1998 – also lead by the Welsh Books Council. By 2007 a number of key organisations in the field in Wales considered that there were now compelling and substantial reasons for organising a similar campaign. The Welsh Assembly Government was committed to supporting an ambitious agenda seeking to develop the nation's skills, and was committed to achieving specific targets for literacy within that overall agenda. Therefore it was considered that an ambitious reading campaign could make a substantial contribution to the achievement of those targets. There was also a new generation of learners as a target audience that could benefit from an ambitious reading campaign, and many innovations had taken place in the technological field and changes in the nature of society in Wales that presented a set of new challenges. Because Wales had held an annual Book Day since 1999, a number of important partnerships had been formed in the field, and it was felt that the well-established practice of working in partnership could offer an appropriate foundation for a wider and more substantial reading campaign.

The political and administrative landscape of Wales had also changed substantially since 1998. The key agencies and organisations in the field were now either part of the Welsh Assembly Government – Basic Skills Cymru, and CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales – or strategic partners in many of their programmes, such as Estyn. The Welsh Books Council had also developed substantial experience of organising campaigns over the same period, including organising the annual World Book Day, and was well used to working in partnership with these agencies and departments over a significant period of time.

3.1 Aims

The general aims adopted for the National Year of Reading in 2008 sought to emulate the successes of the Year of Reading in 1998 when:

- a successful network of partnerships created a high level of awareness of the campaign in support of reading throughout Wales;
- successful and effective means of delivering a campaign were developed, concentrating on projecting reading as a pleasant and important pastime; and
- it was shown that it was possible to effectively coordinate a substantial number of organisations, institutions and contributors and to achieve particular targets.

Naturally it was necessary to update the aims by 2007, by linking the campaign for the National Year of Reading in 2008 with what were regarded as the needs and the priorities of this period. Among the most important were the following:

- seeking to sustain the improvement in the reading attainments of children and adults of all ages;
- seeking to contribute to the task of promoting reading among teenage boys, and
- seeking to develop life skills among adults, because the ability to read leads naturally to the improvement of skills in other areas.

In addition it was argued that a reading campaign which included a number of specific elements and selected schemes could contribute to the achievement of other campaigns and initiatives, such as promoting sustainable communities, promoting social interaction and the enrichment of the Welsh cultural experience.

A number of achievable aims were selected from that context and from those wider aspirations, and a particular emphasis was placed on:

- promoting reading as a valuable pastime and as something very relevant to the workplace, especially among those groups sometimes considered to be difficult to reach or traditionally reluctant to read;
- targeting groups considered to be disadvantaged and who could not, for various reasons, derive benefit from the practice of reading;
- encouraging children and their parents to read together, and extending the use of information and communication technology in order to promote reading;

- provide a bridge between reading and pursuing a formal course of education or training in order to develop skills, and
- seeking to ensure that reading becomes an integral and natural part of life.

As this Report will show, these elements pervaded all the activities held under the auspices of the National Year of Reading in 2008.

3.2 Developing the campaign and the work programme

Following discussions with Welsh Assembly Government officials it was decided that the three core organisations that could lead the preparatory work for the Year and develop relevant campaigns for the National Year of Reading in Wales in 2008 would be Basic Skills Cymru, CyMAL and Estyn and it was also decided to seek the cooperation of other relevant organisations, such as the local authorities, and their library services in particular. As the Year developed major contributions were also forthcoming from a large number of other organisations in Wales.

The three organisations noted above already had work programmes and campaigns in place that were regarded as being centrally relevant to the Year of Reading. Basic Skills Cymru is the organisation primarily responsible for promoting numeracy and literacy in Wales, and as such it was possible to link its work programme with the aims and activities of the National Year of Reading in specific areas, and by developing additional aspects and particular emphases within those work programmes. CyMAL has also been supporting a range of campaigns aimed at raising the levels of use made of public library services by the public and raising the image of reading as a pastime and as an important activity. CyMAL has supported a number of reading campaigns since it was established as a Department. During the National Year of Reading Estyn published a report on the development of literacy and organised a conference related to the raising of literacy standards.

At the same time the cooperation and valuable support of the organisation led by the National Literacy Trust and the Reading Agency, and charged with the organisation of the National Year of Reading in England, was obtained. Initial meetings were held between the team in Wales and the team in England for the purpose of exchanging information, and such information was regularly exchanged as the Year progressed. A number of elements in the campaigns in England and Wales were similar, and the emphasis placed on securing the support of the local authorities in both countries is a key common element.

Meetings were held on a regular basis between the organisers in Wales and England, documents were exchanged, information regarding aims and objectives was shared and discussed, and the fruits of searches for information and ideas were shared. Wales borrowed the idea of developing themes for activities in each month of the Year, and that proved to be particularly valuable in terms of developing innovative ideas and schemes.

However, the National Year of Reading in England had been issued with a set of specific requirements and aims by the Department for Education and Skills in London, and a much larger team, with a much broader range of expertise and specialist officers, was created to sustain the Year's activities, and very substantial

financial resources were put at the team's disposal – considerably more than those allocated for the team in Wales.

3.3 Targets set for the National Year of Reading in Wales

Two specific targets were set for the Welsh Books Council in terms of the expected outcomes for the Year, namely

- Organising at least 2,008 events associated with the overall campaign, and
- Establishing 50 Reading Clubs – 08 Clubs – with at least 10 members in each.

In addition, the Welsh Books Council was expected to formulate and organise a substantial publicity and public relations campaign and to commission an evaluative Report on the outcomes of the Year's work, giving particular attention to the issue of whether the main aims and objectives had been achieved, as well as organising an end of Year conference.

Each target was achieved – the first was exceeded, and each of the other requirements were met.

3.4 Organisation and management

When the Welsh Assembly Government decided to support a National Year of Reading, and when the Welsh Books Council had been designated the lead body, it was decided to establish a Steering Committee which included representatives of the three main organisations mentioned earlier. Representatives of the Welsh Assembly Government were also on that Steering Committee and present at the meetings held.

It was the Steering Committee that developed the main aims of the Year for Wales, and also decided what would be the main facets of the campaign and the manner in which that major campaign for Wales should be created, responding to recommendations and suggestions offered by the Welsh Books Council and others in terms of specific activities.

Within the Welsh Books Council an appointment was made to the post of Coordinator for the Year's work – Delyth Humphreys, who had been responsible for the annual Book Day as part of her duties within the Council for many years. An Administrative Assistant was also appointed.

From time to time, according to particular needs, others of the Council's staff contributed their time and expertise to ensuring the success of the National Year of Reading and its various activities, and a number of individuals and specialist companies were also commissioned to undertake particular tasks.

3.5 The roles and functions of the management team, monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the work programme

For a number of reasons, it was decided that the primary functions of the Coordinator and her Assistant, and the Welsh Books Council in general, in terms of responsibilities for the National Year of Reading, would be the following:

- facilitating and promoting the work programme;
- providing practical assistance of all kinds that would ensure that events and elements within the programme were delivered and completed;
- ensuring that monitoring and evaluation procedures were put in place and that they were effective, taking appropriate steps from time to time to ensure that the processes were being applied.

It was not the intention to create an added burden of administrative requirements on partners and contributors. It was already known that the demands on the time of local government officers were many and varied, and on those working in organisations, schools, and various agencies that could contribute to the Year's work. It was also known that many of them were already engaged with innovative and demanding schemes of their own.

Therefore the main administrative emphasis was placed on:

- maintaining close and regular contact with local coordinators, with the range of partners and with commissioned individuals and organisations;
- undertaking whatever work that might be necessary in order to ensure that activities were successful and that the three main projects – 'Give a Book Week', 'Reading Communities' and the 08 Clubs – were delivered;
- raising general levels of awareness regarding the National Year of Reading throughout Wales by producing appropriate materials, maintaining the website, disseminating information and obtaining the attention of the press and other media.

By such approaches it was possible to ensure that reporting mechanisms, monitoring procedures and tracing the development of programme elements were put in place and used, primarily on the basis of regular contact with all participants. Such means were augmented by providing questionnaire templates which would facilitate the collection of key information relating to arrangements put in place locally and about the work programme established, and about the progress in those areas sub-contracted to other organisations. The questionnaires were also designed to gather the views of participants – organisers and the general public, or 'consumers'. A number of local authorities also used their own well-established methods of gathering user opinion and responses to the events they organised – methods normally used by local authorities as they seek to improve the quality and nature of their services to the public. It is known that certain changes and modifications were made to the intended programme of events in order to ensure the success of the provision.

The following *Pro Formas* were designed and offered to participants, even though they were not a prescribed requirement for reasons already noted:
For local authority coordinators:

Pro Forma A: recording information about local Coordinating Committees and their memberships, and about other local partners represented on the Committees;

Pro Forma B: recording information about the use made of the Year's logo and other branding mechanisms within the local authority and within the programme of events generally;

Pro Forma C: listing the events organised locally, returned to the Welsh Books Council every three months, noting dates, names of organisers, locations of events and primary details;

Pro Forma D: noting the responses of organisers to administrative arrangements, numbers of participants attending events, the content of events both local and national, and seeking information regarding future sustainability of such events and their intentions in terms of organising similar events in future years;

Pro Forma E: noting the responses of participants. The questionnaire offered an opportunity to reflect a range of response ratings – from excellent to disappointing – and an opportunity to note the value or impact of the event and the reading campaign on them as individuals.

For 08 Clubs:

An Evaluation Form: giving Club leaders an opportunity to express views and opinions on administrative arrangements and on their experience as leaders of the reading Clubs.

In addition, a general invitation was issued throughout Wales for any organisation that wished to have its activities associated with the National Year of Reading to record its work and programme on the website for the National Year of Reading – organisers and participants – and to express their views and opinions on the Year's work and on the campaign. This Report will make further reference to the website and the experience of using it and its value.

3.6 Delivering the campaign

From the outset it was decided that the most effective and prompt means of creating a campaign based on a range of activities relevant to the aims of the National Year of Reading, and of securing the interest of the largest number possible of potential partners, within a tight timetable, would be to establish a formal partnership with every local authority in Wales, and to invite them to appoint a local coordinator.

That process proved to be successful, and the cooperation of every local authority in Wales was obtained. A person was nominated within each authority to coordinate its activities.

Each local coordinator was encouraged to establish a local coordinating committee which would embrace as many as possible of the National Year of Reading's primary aims and objectives. Several authorities proceeded on that basis, but in some the nominated coordinator worked with others within the authority as and when necessary rather than using a committee to create and administer the events, and in some authorities a committee was established in the initial stages in order to advise on the creation of a campaign. Thereafter the work was conducted by the local coordinator.

By such a range of approaches, a valuable contribution was offered by each authority and by a wide range of people with a range of specialist knowledge and expertise.

By working through the local authorities it was possible to secure a varied programme of activity to sustain the overall campaign whilst addressing the perceived local needs and priorities at the same time.

The range of specialist skills made available locally is impressive. The membership of the various local committees varied quite naturally as they reflected local corporate arrangements and structures as well as the service priorities identified locally. But most of the committees offered a number of the following: advisers in the area of basic skills and literacy, local education coordinators, after-school education coordinators, head teachers, extension librarians and marketing officers, language coordinators and play organisers as well as coordinators of services for children in care, teacher advisers in Welsh and English, adult services coordinators in the field of basic skills, family learning officers, early years and key stage education specialists, improvement and standards officers in the area of education, community and youth service organisers, theatre officers and heritage and arts officers, carers in specialist care centres for the elderly, school and children's librarians, senior education advisers, museums officers, reading promotion officers, specialist teachers of English and Welsh, play specialists, adult education officers, health promotion officers, and many more.

Local authorities responded enthusiastically and appropriately to the challenge offered to them, namely promoting and conducting a campaign to promote reading within challenging and different environments. In those few cases where a local coordinator was not appointed, the coordinating role was assumed by the library service.

In terms of administering the campaigns locally, coordination tended to concentrate on working within local authority departments and structures, and even though that range of services is very wide, relatively few organisations and bodies outside local government were represented on local coordinating committees, even though the final work programme that was conducted often depended to a significant degree on the contributions and involvement of a wide range of organisations, institutions and agencies active within communities. This Report will discuss that particular contribution in greater detail when it considers in more detail some of the primary elements and contributors to the overall reading campaign associated with the National Year of Reading.

It is appropriate to note, however, that the local authorities responded in a very committed way, devoting time, resources and not a little innovation and originality, to the tasks they were given, especially when it is noted that the budget allocated to the National Year of Reading in Wales did not allow the allocation of specific resources to local authorities to spend on the delivery of their plans. At a time when the authorities indicate that they are under considerable constraints in terms of resources, this was a substantial contribution, and a contribution that proved to be key to the achievement of the target of at least 2,008 events within the Year.

4. The Year of Reading Campaign 2008

4.1 The events organised by local coordinators

This Report has already noted that the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills in the Welsh Assembly Government, Jane Hutt AM, set a specific target in terms of the number of events that should be organised under the banner of the National Year of Reading 2008, namely 2,008. By the end of December 2008, 2,509 events had been organised and delivered.

When measured against that target, therefore, it should be noted that the National Year of Reading was a success, and it is clear that the contribution of the local coordinators who worked on the various local campaigns and events was key to achieving that target.

It is not the purpose of this Report to describe in detail the varied and rich programme that was delivered, which can be obtained from scanning the website. Nevertheless it is important to acknowledge that:

- partnership working is very apparent in the local campaigns – partnerships between local government departments and agencies, local organisations, the voluntary sector, the commercial sector and others. This aspect will be further explored in a particular section of this Report;
- a remarkable range of activities, events and work programmes were brought together when developing and delivering the Year's campaign;
- public response was excellent both in terms of the number of people participating in the activity and in terms of their overall satisfaction levels. Even though some additional evidence is still to be gathered and collated – it will be recalled that this Report was compiled before all the Year's work had been completed and finally reported in order to meet the Conference target – the following indicative statistics can be offered:

4.1.1 Participation/attendance

Event organisers were asked to record attendances at the events they organised, and from those figures it has been possible to calculate the average attendance at each event on the basis of a substantial sample of data and statistics.

Average attendance or participation at events was 43.63 persons, within a range from 0 (events cancelled due to particular circumstances – lack of interest or inclement weather) to 333. By multiplying that figure by the number of events held and adding the attendance at 'reading community' events in Llanelli and Barry (which are discussed later in the Report), and the membership of the 08 Clubs, it is possible to state with confidence that more than 106,000 people in Wales participated directly in the National Year of Reading campaign in 2008.

4.1.2 Levels of satisfaction among participants

People attending National Year of Reading events, both adults and young people, were given the opportunity to express their views on those events. Views and opinions could be expressed against a seven-point range of response, from

Excellent to Disappointing. The following results were obtained, again based on a substantial sample:

	%
Excellent	10.00
Grade 5	58.00
Grade 4	25.00
Grade 3	3.00
Grade 2	2.00
Grade 1	1.00
Disappointing	0.37

93% of the participants therefore indicated a high level of satisfaction. A very small number of persons indicated their dissatisfaction with certain aspects of the events programme – subject matter being of little interest to them, events being too well attended resulting in a certain shortage of access to resources or facilities or limited opportunities to engage with the full range of activities at events.

In terms of the organisation of events, participants were given a similar opportunity to express their views, and the following responses were obtained:

	%
Excellent	10.00
Grade 5	57.00
Grade 4	28.00
Grade 3	3.00
Grade 2	1.50
Grade 1	0.11
Disappointing	0.17

Again the few adverse comments obtained referred to lack of space at events, or to the lack of access to materials. 95% of participants were highly satisfied with the conduct of the campaign, and this is a tribute to the organisers throughout Wales.

- 4.1.3** 87% of respondents indicated that participating in events had encouraged or inspired them to read more.
- 4.1.4** 67% of local event organisers for the National Year of Reading 2008 indicated that they intended to offer a programme of events in 2009, and this is a significant response, even though a number of those respondents and others who did not state their intentions with particular certainty did add that their aspirations could relate to the availability of future funding to support their work.
- 4.1.5** The evidence regarding effective publicity campaigns for local events is particularly interesting. A large number of different sources of information were cited by respondents in terms of where they obtained information about National Year of Reading events – from a chat in a chip shop to local newspaper adverts, information from schools and teachers, from a neighbour or from another family

member. *Pro Forma E* offers some valuable insights into this issue that could be valuable for local organisers in future.

4.2 The outcomes of the National Year of Reading 2008 – the local events

Promoting the reading habit and the skills associated with or derived from reading and the enjoyment of books is a long-term process, and it would not be appropriate to try to arrive at firm conclusions within a few weeks of the end of the National Year of Reading, but it is already possible to cite evidence that proves its worth. That evidence shows:

- **that a large number of people discovered or began to recognise the value of reading and books for the first time:**

‘Reading helps me with my spelling...’

‘I don’t have time to read but it is obviously very important for the children...’

‘This will help me with the state of my education...’

‘Reading will help me get further in life...’

‘Reading will help me when I am seeking employment in future...’

‘I will be able to write better...’

‘I think reading is very important when you are learning to speak Welsh...’

‘Reading is an important skill in life’

‘Reading offers better access to the imagination side of things...’

‘I have not been to the library before – it’s good’

‘My great love is football, but I’m going to come to the library now to borrow stuff to help me with school work’

‘Reading is likely to create a good imagination and develop better communication skills...’

‘Reading will help me bond with my child and when he is learning...’

‘Reading will make me more smart...’

- **that a large number of people have rediscovered the pleasure and the value gained from reading and using books:**

‘We are members of the library, but we don’t come very often, but we will be coming more often now as our children want to be part of the activities...’

‘I got a large number of new ideas and I shall be using them in my work...’

‘Excellent new ideas for the future...’

‘This was an unexpectedly excellent experience...’

- **and that many people derived benefit and pleasure from being participants in the campaign that reinforced their love of books and reading and rejuvenated their appreciation of their value:**

‘Reading is a big part of my life...’

‘I had a blood pressure test and a book to read about my health...’

‘Reading is much better than watching television...’

‘Reading is a big help to me when I am composing poetry and in my creative writing...’

‘Reading is my best friend, it sustains and educates me... and our libraries are available free of charge...’

‘Reading makes me a citizen of the world...’

‘It helps to keep the dark things away, like old age...’

'It helps me when I try to express my feelings...'
 'It helps me in terms of building my own confidence...'
 'Reading provides inspiration and it encourages the thought process, and it also offers an opportunity to escape...'
 'Reading is an essential part of my life...'
 'This is the fountain of life...'
 'This is a way of broadening my horizons in terms of human activity and maintaining relationships...'
 'Reading provides information and it stimulates, it offers new ideas and it improves my understanding of aspirations, opinions and fears...'
 'By reading you can meet other minds...'
 'Reading offers pure pleasure...'
 'Reading is essential to education, to development and to originality of thought...'
 'We've enjoyed the event very much, even my 10-year-old son wants to read poetry now...'
 'It is obvious that the library has so much to offer...'
 'The event was lively and a great pleasure, and it is certain to make me read more in the future...'
 'Reading is an excellent way of relaxing, and it is a big help to me in my work...'
 'My favourite authors have become bosom pals...'
 'Reading offers that immense gift – the ability to communicate...'
 'There's no doubt that a good book can open doors and stimulate the mind...'
 'The event was really excellent. It had been organised so well and so full of fun...'
 'I had the idea of writing an autobiography in the hope that other people can learn from my mistakes...'
 'I have to read, I cannot live without it...'
 'The event was excellent and had been organised superbly...'
 'This was an event that showed thought and detailed preparatory work, and it was very appropriate for the audience...'
 'Everything was a great pleasure...can we have more please?'

Further evidence that reflects the impact and value of the National Year of Reading is available in subsequent sections of this Report that deal with the specific campaigns and the events associated with them.

5. The specific campaigns

Following the early discussions concerning the primary thrusts and aims of the National Year of Reading 2008 campaign at the Steering Committee, it was agreed that a number of specific key campaigns should be identified so that a particular focus could be provided for the Year whilst augmenting the various local work programmes that would be coordinated by the local authorities. The Welsh Books Council proposed three key projects:

- the 'Give a Book Week' project
- the 'Reading Communities' project, and
- the 08 Clubs project, intended to establish a network of reading clubs targeting membership among pupils of late primary school and early secondary school age, and boys in particular.

It was anticipated that supporting these schemes could:

- create programmes of events and activity that could be sustainable and could transcend the Year of Reading as such;
- provide an opportunity to experiment with different delivery models in terms of administration and ways of supporting activities;
- establish good practice in terms of promoting and supporting reading in English and Welsh.

5.1 'Give a Book Week'

This campaign was held during the second week of July 2008.

The intention was to create a high-profile project that would draw the public's attention to books and reading primarily through a range of fairly simple activities that would be a source of pleasure for participants.

The project sought to underline the message that:

- the National Year of Reading was something for everyone and that age, background or indeed the level of literacy was immaterial in terms of enabling participation;
- giving or receiving a book as a gift was an exciting, interesting and valuable habit. The message sought to impress on the public the fact that a book could be a much appreciated gift at all times and an ideal gift in many circumstances. Selecting the right book for the right person is what is emphasised by educators and librarians.

The campaign was regarded as a potentially effective means of generating support for the National Year of Reading from individuals and institutions, and it was hoped that it would generate considerable media attention.

This was an ambitious campaign, and even though responsibility for its management and delivery lay with the small team within the Welsh Books Council, the services of a specialist public relations company, Golley Slater, was commissioned to assist with certain essential tasks, such as creating visual images for the campaign, branding, creating promotional materials, and carrying out a publicity campaign and seeking support and interest from individuals, organisations and some of the celebrities of Welsh public life.

Golley Slater also provided advice as to the appropriate combination of methods that could be used to disseminate the key messages of the National Year of Reading.

A radio advertising campaign was launched – regrettably, the budget of the National Year of Reading would not extend to funding a television advertising campaign. The advertisement was broadcast on twelve local radio stations across Wales over a period of a fortnight, reaching a potential audience of more than a million people.

The community newspapers were also targeted. Many of them allocated at least a page to promote the campaign, giving detailed attention to books, particularly those with a local flavour, and local bookshops also gave their support.

A wide range of promotional materials was created, including posters, leaflets, cards, book bands, and such materials were distributed widely to schools, libraries, bookshops, charity shops and many other organisations. By using the charity shops it was possible to present a visual message on behalf of the National Year of Reading in shop windows on high streets across Wales and this offered an opportunity to work in partnership with the charitable and voluntary sectors.

There was considerable consultation before the scheme was launched, and it was necessary to give particular consideration to several aspects which would direct the main thrust of the campaign. It was recognised that it was necessary:

- to provide clear but simple branding;
- to choose the best time to conduct the campaign, and considerable efforts were devoted to obtaining maximum media coverage over a concentrated but short period of time;
- to ensure that the campaign made an impact. Even though it was a campaign sustained over a period of a week or so, it sought to establish good practice and a model for action that could be emulated many times in the future.

In terms of timing, it was decided that the optimum period would be at the end of the academic year in schools and colleges and educational establishments of all kinds, presenting them with a special opportunity to give books as gifts to their leavers. The project was launched on Thursday, 19 June 2008, on Queen Street in Cardiff in the presence of the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, together with Simon Weston, the former soldier and supporter of many good causes. A representative of the Noah's Ark appeal was also present to acknowledge a gift of books worth £1,000 to the Children's Hospital of Wales. Books were presented as gifts to members of the public during their lunch hour and an enthusiastic and appreciative response was witnessed.

The launch was followed by an emailing campaign which sent messages encouraging individuals to participate in the campaign. By contacting many institutions, associations and societies, some 164,000 messages were sent to individuals during a period of three weeks.

In accordance with current fashion, the support of celebrities from various walks of Welsh life was secured – personalities from television, sport and the political world all gave their support. They were persuaded to give a book as a gift to a friend, and such gifts were presented as publicity packages to the media.

According to the calculations carried out by Golley Slater in accordance with accepted practice in the public relations domain:

- 14 articles or features were placed with an estimated EAV of nearly £38,000 and a PR value in excess of £113,000;
- substantial media coverage and attention was obtained.

In addition to the above, specific activity was reported that shows the impact of the campaign. It is worth noting some examples to provide the flavour of public response. Each leaver from Danygraig School in Swansea received a book as a gift from the school; the Aberystwyth branch of Merched y Wawr in collaboration with Honno, the Welsh women's press, presented the women's shelter in Aberystwyth with a collection of books; pupils from Ysgol Syr Hugh Owen Caernarfon took a parcel of books to Zambia and distributed them to children during their visit to that country, and the gift of books to the Children's Hospital was noted above. Accent Press distributed 1,500 books among 5,000 Corus workers at various sites in Wales.

Members of the Welsh Assembly Government's Cabinet received gifts of books and also the new Mayor of London!

The photographs of some of the donors and recipients of gifts were placed on the website in order to further promote the Year: their reasons for supporting the campaign and their reasons for choosing their friends and the particular books were also recorded.

The principle of donating gifts of books was established from the outset when the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills donated books worth £30,000 to community groups across Wales. Each library authority in Wales received 360 books to be distributed to local groups within their authorities.

Donations of books were made to:

- community groups, such as basic skills groups, community centres, day centres of various kinds;
- groups of disadvantaged children and young people and families under the care of social services;
- family centres, clinics, hospitals and hostels for the homeless;
- nurseries and playgroups;
- prison communities;
- residents of shelter housing complexes and residential homes for the elderly;
- special schools;
- groups of Welsh learners; and
- shelters for women.

Half way through the Year more than a hundred groups had already received their gifts and the work of distributing books continued for the rest of the Year. By these means and other specific actions, the Year of Reading made effective contact with special communities and responded to their needs.

5.2 'Reading Communities'

This campaign was based on a model of promotional activity used successfully in several countries across the world, such as the 'reading cities' schemes in England and the United States, and it was adopted and tailored to the needs of the National Year of Reading in Wales. Two communities were to be invited to participate in a programme of activities over a specific and concentrated period of time between September and October, based on selecting two titles, one in English and one in Welsh. It was anticipated that the scheme would:

- create a programme of activity that would be sustainable for the future and after the Year of Reading had been completed;
- strengthen the practice of working in partnership within the area;
- promote community ownership of the project and the associated programme of activity, and which would permit the selected communities to choose the books that would form the basis of the activity and events;
- create a varied range of events located in a variety of locations within the community;
- attract press and media attention;
- create a model of activity that could be recorded on the Year's website and that could be emulated and re-used in other communities across Wales.

Each local authority in Wales was invited to bid for the work of creating a 'reading community' in accordance with the aims and objectives of the scheme via the good offices of the Society of Chief Librarians in Wales, and on the basis of an open competition for the £20,000 earmarked for each of the winning communities, the areas selected were Barry in the Vale of Glamorgan and Llanelli in Carmarthenshire.

5.2.1 Reading Communities – Barry

Under the leadership of the authority's library service, the Barry project created a varied programme of activity and events. There were five aspects to the project:

- a campaign to encourage the residents of Barry to vote for their favourite books, the eventual choice being the basis for the main activities. This aspect was given the title of 'Barry: Our Big Read';
- a programme of activity held over one weekend, given the title of 'Book Bash';
- a creative writing scheme;
- creating a public mural;
- creating a programme of events based on the work of an author in residence.

The public vote – ‘The Big Read’

Choosing the books that would reflect public taste presented a substantial challenge. A number of partners participated in the process of establishing a short list, and they included local reading groups, adult education tutors, equal opportunity officers and the Welsh language officer for the authority, local Welsh bookshops, school teachers, Merched y Wawr and others. A panel representing these interest groups was set up, and the selection process sought to offer a list that would include books of Welsh and local interest.

Voting boxes were distributed to a wide range of locations – leisure centres, libraries, bookshops, Council offices, and the offices of voluntary groups within the authority. It was also possible to vote via the Year of Reading’s website. The vote was held over six weeks during the summer and 649 people voted. Supplies of the titles on the short list were purchased by the library service and the demand for the titles was greater than anticipated because prospective voters wished to read all the titles on the list before voting!

The programme of events – the ‘Book Bash’

A total of 423 people attended the various events held within the central library and art gallery over one weekend, with a third of them noting that they had not attended any similar events in the past, nor had they been to the library before. 98% of the participants noted that they had enjoyed the events and had gained from attendance, with 86% noting that they had discovered something new about the world of books and literature during their visit. The nature and content of the programme can be seen on the Year’s website.

The author in residence

The author in residence, Michael Harvey, was given the task of reading from the winning titles in the public vote and he also lead discussions of the works with reading groups and other community groups. The discussions were held as part of the weekend events in the public library and also with groups of Welsh learners, in nursing homes, with reading groups and with a group of pupils from the local bilingual secondary school. A very positive response was obtained from the groups that attended those sessions: ‘reading brought the books alive’, ‘a magical atmosphere was created, and the craft of the story teller was very apparent’, and ‘the sessions were exceptionally valuable and they are certain to inspire more of the students to read more...’

The creative writing scheme

This scheme sought to respond to the aspirations of groups with special needs who attended the Open Learning Centre in Barry. The work was lead by Phil Carradice. The abilities of group members were very varied, and a number of the group were immigrants into the area from overseas countries. Three workshops were held and an interesting range of creative writing was produced at the end of the programme. According to the tutor, the scheme had added to the confidence and self-esteem of the participants and had improved their listening, comprehension and communication skills, and the element of sheer enjoyment was readily apparent. As a result of the work, the Centre is offering leisure reading groups and planning creative writing groups for the less able members. Some of those who participated in the workshops expressed their delight at what had been achieved – ‘why are

these groups not carrying on for longer periods?', 'I had quite a shock when I realised what I could do...', 'we had quite a surprise when we realised how many ideas we had created...'

The mural project

Under the leadership of community artist Bryce Davies, this project involved a group of students from Barry College. The task they were given was to create a suitable mural to be permanently displayed in the Youth section of Barry's new central library, on a theme related to Barry as a reading community. The mural was unveiled during the 'Book Bash' and it is a permanent and attractive record of the work of the project and the work successfully undertaken by the reading community scheme in Barry.

Managing the project – reflecting on the experience

As a result of the success of the 2008 project, Barry library is likely to offer a programme of events related to reading and books in 2009, possibly on a less ambitious scale should no additional resources be available. Two elements from 2008 will be retained – the public vote to select the most popular titles and a programme of related events. This is because the 2008 project has been deemed a great success. Undoubtedly the event managed to:

- generate public enthusiasm and attract new readers of all kinds;
- create a foundation for innovative and ambitious activity by means of utilising a partnership approach;
- develop the abilities and skills of the organisers and the managers;
- show what kinds of events were likely to be more popular, and the 2008 experience also showed that a concentrated programme of events held over a limited period was likely to be more successful than a programme of occasional events held over a longer period;
- show that a concentrated programme of events was more likely to attract publicity and attention;
- raise the profile of book and library services within the community and the profile of organisations wishing to participate in successful events;
- attract additional sponsorship from the local authority to support the project.

It was also possible to arrive at certain key conclusions in relation to the best ways of organising events in the future. The following conclusions and inferences can be deduced from the Barry reading community experience:

- that the essential components and content of a programme need to be agreed from the outset;
- that timing events is very important in terms of ensuring success;

- that a longer planning period is very necessary – longer than was possible to permit in 2008 – in order to ensure that there is time available to plan programmes and events in greater detail and more time to implement schemes, and so that quiet periods in the social and cultural calendars of communities can be avoided;
- that additional and adequate funding should be made available for the purposes of offering an innovative programme of activity, especially when there is a need to generate community enthusiasm and participation on a significant scale;
- that conducting a programme of events on this scale requires considerable commitment from staff and all other participants, and there should be an awareness of the range of skills available and at the disposal of the project and what kinds of support can be anticipated from others, and such considerations require time for reflection and assessment;
- that the managerial approach adopted by the Barry project offers a successful model. Six managers from the library service were responsible for the project, each being responsible for specific aspects. Clear focus and allocation of duties is essential to the success of a project.

5.2.2 Reading Communities – Llanelli

The project centred on Llanelli was slightly different in terms of approach, and concentrated its activity entirely around promoting and using two selected titles. The intention was to create a reading campaign based primarily on the fifteen library service points within the convenient reach of the inhabitants of Llanelli, with the community selecting and celebrating two titles, one in Welsh, the other in English.

The public vote

As was the case in Barry, the community of Llanelli was invited to vote for their favoured titles – voting on ballot papers or via the Year's website. A short list of titles was offered to prospective voters, one in English, the other in Welsh. That list was deliberately selected to include books of strong local interest, and the decision to target a known interest in local history and local authors proved to be a wise decision as it secured significant community response.

More than 600 votes were cast by the public and two titles emerged as clear winners, one by a local author who was a former police officer in the Llanelli area, the other by a person who had been an evacuee in Llanelli from Liverpool during the Second World War but who currently resides in the United States. He was present at the event when the winning titles were revealed, and the event was televised live on S4C. More than 300 votes were cast for the winning English-language title, *Before the Last All Clear* by Ray Evans, and the most popular Welsh title, *Coeliwch neu Beidio*, the autobiography of Roy Davies, was a clear winner with more than 200 votes being cast in its favour.

Promoting the titles

The essential purpose of the Llanelli campaign was to promote interest in the two most popular titles in the public vote, and by that means to encourage the

community to read more. A public exhibition of the titles was held in the town centre and in a nearby arts centre, and the public's attention was drawn to the works via radio and television nationally and locally, particularly on the programmes produced locally in the town and in the local press.

Two events were held to celebrate the works and to honour the authors, one in English, the other in Welsh. These events included contributions from the publishers of the works, together with public readings and multi-media presentations and oral tributes.

Community response

More than 160 people attended the various events associated with the winning titles, with more people attending the Welsh-language event even though more votes had been cast in the vote for the English-language titles. During the period in which the public vote was held and the titles promoted – between July and December – the library in Llanelli experienced a 15% increase in book loans, and an 11% increase in the number of Welsh books borrowed.

Managing the event: some conclusions

The experience gained from offering the Llanelli model of a reading community has revealed a number of important outcomes and guidelines for future events:

- The statistics relating to all aspects of participation indicated above suggest that the approach adopted by the Llanelli project on behalf of the community by Carmarthenshire library service, giving detailed attention to the titles selected by the community, can be effective, especially when the project has a strong local flavour;
- The project was managed by a small group of people with the assistance of a local bookseller and the central team at the Welsh Books Council. According to the organisers, there are certain advantages from working in this manner, with each member of the team being given certain responsibilities, and community libraries lending their additional support;
- As part of the administrative structure for this project, a local coordinator was employed to assist the campaign, and that decision appears to have secured a number of advantages in terms of delivering the different elements of the programme in accordance with the scheduled timetable and the original aims;
- As was the case in Barry, the tight timetable available for the project created some problems because the period included the traditionally quiet summer months in terms of the community's social and cultural calendar;
- The limited time available was probably responsible for the fact that the number of participating partners in this scheme was small – they take time to build – but that relative limitation was more than counterbalanced by the successful emphasis on gaining press and media publicity; Llanelli is now a media town, and that emphasis appears to have been fully justified.

Apart from encouraging voters, this scheme appears to have made only limited use of the Year of Reading's website, and that is disappointing, but there are undoubtedly technological and social reasons for that. Not every community

and group is a natural user of technology in the context of reading and books, and it is necessary to select very carefully when and how to use technology in reading campaigns. Nevertheless the Llanelli team launched a blog and a significant proportion of the public vote was cast for the favoured titles via the website.

5.2.3 Other reading communities throughout Wales

By collaborating with the marketing strategy for Welsh public libraries funded by CyMAL under its Libraries for Life programme, and coordinated by Wrexham library service, a scheme was created to enable all other local authorities to participate in the reading communities initiative – the 20 authorities who had not competed for or won the franchise offered by the National Year of Reading's reading community project in 2008. A scheme offering £10,000 from the National Year of Reading's budget, together with £1,500 per authority from the CyMAL Libraries for Life programme based on the 'Happy Days' marketing initiative, was made available. Under the terms of the scheme authorities could link their work on the annual reading challenge with that initiative, with the intention of encouraging all library authorities to participate fully in the autumn marketing campaign by organising a series of events between October and November. Each authority was expected to:

- reach new audiences and readers;
- promote reading as a pleasurable leisure pursuit;
- share skills, abilities and experience in stronger and new partnerships;
- evaluate their work and the outcomes of their work and present an end of project report, and
- try to ensure that similar work could be organised in future, using the experience gained from the National Year of Reading 2008, and on the basis of the capacity created within the workforce.

The response was enthusiastic. Many of the authorities adopted the primary themes of the National Year of Reading, using sport as a motivating force to promote reading, and many used the monthly themes offered to them via the National Year of Reading website. Some linked their work to the Faber initiative in England, and others selected books and themes with local emphases. Others used the opportunity to strengthen partnerships with learning and educational institutions, targeting schools or contributing to in-service training events for teachers. Considerable ingenuity and originality is apparent in the use of incentives, and a particularly enthusiastic response was obtained from the public to day-long events related to reading, books and words and to opportunities to meet authors and to listen to public readings and discussions of their works.

Scrutiny of the end of project reports reveals some important guidelines and evidence:

- the contribution of the central National Year of Reading team at the Welsh Books Council was greatly appreciated and key to the success of many of the activities;

- even though there is a significant difference in the number of participants who attended the various events and activities, as was to be expected, the public response was particularly enthusiastic, and this particular initiative contributed substantially to the achievement of the target of events stipulated for the National Year of Reading 2008. More than 300 children and their parents attended a bear hunt in one authority, a programme intended to promote the use of stories and words among young children and their parents and carers, and more than 330 children of various age groups attended story sessions in another authority. Sixty older children attended a day of quizzes based on their reading and their ability to search for information, and more than 60 people attended author-led reading and discussion sessions. More than 350 people attended events to promote joint reading – parents with their children – and many important initiatives emphasised the importance of reading to all aspects of life, including promoting good health;
- the programme of events had a significant beneficial effect on library use patterns. The evidence cites a number of cases where libraries experienced increases in issues following events – up to 5% in a month – and in the numbers of new members enrolled for the first time; up to 400 enrolled in a short period of three weeks in some instances. Many parents indicated that they had not been to the library previously, and many wished to enrol their children as members of the service and to return on a regular basis to their local libraries;
- there was a significant increase in the numbers of children commencing and completing the summer reading challenge – in one case there was an increase of 19% in the numbers that registered at the start of the challenge, and the number of children who completed the challenge was 34% up on the previous year, and most of the authorities reported an increase in the numbers completing the challenge. In one authority 40% of the school population had registered for the reading challenge, and as 68% of the children had actually completed the challenge, the authority was among the top ten in terms of success in the United Kingdom. Placing the summer reading challenge in a broader context and within the programme of events branded under the National Year of Reading banner was obviously a significant contributory factor;
- even though the monies made available for this scheme were very limited, the programme of events and activities created was more ambitious and more confident than the programmes previously possible. There is evidence of effective collaborative and partnership work between a range of organisations, the young and old and between the generations;
- most of the events had provided an ‘eye opener’ for participants according to public response;
- there was a conscientious effort to ensure that language balance in the programme of events and in the background of the guests and authors was appropriate;
- there is evidence that shows that participation extended through all age groups – from the age of three to ninety in one event;

- there is evidence that a number of participants in discussion groups have been encouraged to discuss their own work, their own writing skills and to learn more about the process of publishing their work;
- the needs of those with special requirements were addressed, with the events being held in locations outside libraries, such as hospitals, receiving particular public praise;
- most of the authorities have indicated that they are already committing themselves to offering a range of events related to books and reading in 2009. Some had offered ambitious programmes of events for the first time in 2008 and the success of those ventures had given them greater confidence in their abilities to deliver similar programmes in future;
- library authorities will have greater experience and valuable feedback as guidance and advice as to how programmes of events can be organised, and when and how certain events should be offered. That is particularly the case in those instances when the special needs of certain groups were addressed, or in terms of those groups which have been traditionally regarded as being hard to reach. Experience shows that there is a need in those circumstances to display originality, to work on the basis of expert advice and to show persistence and resilience. Many respondents indicated that time is needed to build up partnerships, especially of the more specialised kind, and to develop appropriate programmes. Some events are best held at certain times of the year, and each authority should be allowed to respond appropriately to local and known sets of circumstances.

When reflecting on the experience of this aspect of the work of the National Year of Reading in 2008, it is possible to deduce that providing a specific focus for the work is important, and providing a concentrated programme of events appears to be most successful. In future, it is suggested that the 'Reading Community' model should be extended to other authorities, with at least one major campaign being organised each year. The elements of central support that appear to have been much valued and appreciated in 2008 (creating themes, providing publicity and support and so on) should be retained. Participating authorities should be encouraged to continue with a similar programme of reading events based on the 'Reading Community' model in subsequent years. This is further discussed in the final section of this Report among the recommendations.

5.3 The 08 Reading Clubs

From the outset this project was seen as the one most likely to present significant challenges. There are many reading groups throughout Wales and a number of successful campaigns involving reading groups have been completed in recent times, such as the Estyn Allan project. But the 08 Clubs scheme presented a significant challenge in terms of its aims and objectives, namely:

- to identify or establish 50 clubs which would operate under the auspices of the scheme, with at least ten members in each club;

- to target pupils in the last years of primary school and the early years of secondary school, and to attract as many boys as possible within that age range – a traditionally reluctant constituency. It was hoped that as many as possible of the clubs would be active outside the school environment;
- to develop reading and associated activity around a sports theme;
- to establish clubs operating in the Welsh and English languages;
- to hold at least six club sessions under the National Year of Reading scheme;
- to establish clubs that could continue after the Year of Reading.

A number of these aims and objectives had to be refined and modified. Following discussions at the Steering Committee set up to guide the project, with national coordinators (Dafydd and Bethan Whittall), it was agreed that it was not feasible to commence the activities of the clubs until September 2008 in order to avoid problems associated with the transfer of pupils from one school to another.

During the detailed planning process, it was agreed that:

- an emphasis should be placed on creating opportunities to develop a varied programme of activities which could develop enthusiastic and independent individual readers, and it would be even better if much of the work was to concentrate on targeting boys who were regarded as reluctant readers;
- there should be an attempt to recruit group leaders from differing backgrounds from the usual language and reading tutors in schools. To that end the specialist advice of Angela Bliszko, of ContinYou, was obtained. She was a specialist in the areas of creating programmes of out-of-school activities among young people, and by that means it was possible to develop a set of guidelines and a range of ideas and tasks that would provide a programme of associated activity for the reading clubs;

A small budget was distributed to each club when it was formed, with its members deciding how that money was to be spent – on activities, on inviting an author to attend the club, or on arranging a visit to a particular place. A package of gifts was also organised for each club, to be distributed over the period so that enthusiasm and loyalty could be maintained among the members. The website has a special area devoted to the clubs and their members, and using the website and contributing to it was an activity encouraged by group leaders.

Considerable care was taken from the outset to ensure that a suitable administrative structure was put in place to support the clubs. The attention given to that matter undoubtedly reaped many benefits and contributed significantly to the success of the project. To support the national coordinators a team of regional coordinators was established and they in turn supported the work of the group leaders. Effective and regular lines of communication were maintained between the clubs and the coordinators. This is a model worth preserving and using in the future.

There appear to have been many interesting and stimulating activities – some clubs were launched during a visit to a major football club or in the company of a major

sports personality, or by visiting leisure centres to play ten pin bowling, for example. Group members created names for their clubs and those names reflect the groups' ingenuity and enthusiasm.

A practical problem arose when the books that would be the foundation of all the work of the clubs were being selected. Originally it was expected that each club would select its own books, and that has been generally regarded in the past as best practice as the interests and abilities of the groups can best be reflected in the choice. Such a process also encourages ownership of the club and of its activities among the members. However, in this instance, because the leaders of the clubs were from rather different backgrounds, with some of them leading groups for the very first time, and because there were time constraints imposed by the project, the coordinators offered the advice that books should be selected and supplied centrally, and this was accepted. It was therefore the coordinators who made the final choice in terms of books.

With the fundamental objectives settled and the operational details having been agreed, the project successfully established 50 Clubs with more than 500 members, and this was achieved with considerable ease. This can be attributed to the important work of the national Coordinators and to the work of the five regional coordinators – in north-west Wales, in the north-east, in Cardiff and district, in Llanelli and district and in south-west Wales. The Club leaders also deserve substantial praise for the work they undertook. The scheme was supported by schools, libraries and youth clubs. A number of practical problems were overcome by using registered centres and individuals, and the schools who participated in the project managed to ensure that the atmosphere within each club remained informal. The work of the clubs will continue into the early months of 2009 at least, and there is evidence that suggests that a good number of the clubs will remain in existence as they have been so successful.

The regular meetings held between the club leaders, the regional coordinators and the national coordinators, together with the central officers of the National Year of Reading have contributed significantly to the success of the scheme. At these meetings it was possible to exchange information and ideas, share experiences and create new and different activities. It proved easier to maintain enthusiasm when a sporting hero became associated with a club, and this proved easier in south Wales. But support and interest was also forthcoming from the broadcasting media throughout Wales and from personalities from Welsh public life. The contribution of the central Year of Reading team within the Welsh Books Council has also elicited praise from the coordinators across Wales on account of the practical support that was offered in terms of supplying books, materials and gift packs to promote and sustain interest, together with maintaining the club website, which, quite naturally, was of interest to the children and young people. Marketing work was also regarded as having been effective.

A substantial body of feedback was obtained from club leaders, and there are some recurring comments and themes within that feedback which could be particularly valuable in terms of the future sustainability of the project:

- the project successfully met the target of 50 clubs with at least 500 members, even within the tight time constraints imposed by the National Year of Reading timetable. Coordinators expressed a view that a hundred and more clubs could be established across Wales in the future given time and resources to sustain the project, and resources to support and develop their work;

- setting up the clubs and securing the support of members proved to be a relatively easy task, especially when inducements could be offered to both leaders and members. The idea of providing gifts to club members proved to be particularly popular and effective;
- there has been no difficulty in ensuring that activity took place in English and Welsh, and some schools used the clubs to strengthen second-language activity – in English in the naturally Welsh areas of Wales;
- some schools which were not part of the project expressed some envy that they could not be part of the initiative, and there appears to have been some mild but friendly jealousy between pupils on the basis of membership and non-membership of the clubs;
- the majority of the membership of the clubs were boys, and in some instances the clubs were exclusively for boys;
- offering a programme of supplementary activity proved to be a critical success factor for the project. However, not every club was able to participate in the activities programme and the other supplementary competitions due to constraints on time. It is felt that a programme of supplementary and supportive events is something to be developed over a period of time, and in the opinion of many group leaders that would be sufficient reason to support the continuation of the clubs and the scheme;
- it would appear that the number of young people actually reading the books issued to club members was augmented to a significant degree by inter-lending among peers and friends, and that this became a notable feature in many schools;
- within schools, clubs have to compete against many of the other demands made on the time of young people, and against the already full school timetable. That can have a limiting effect on attendance and commitment, and issues such as timing and location have to be addressed. Even so, the evidence shows that attendance at the clubs in the vast majority of cases was very high. In those few cases where the majority of the members were known to be reluctant readers and having special needs, attendance levels could be variable, and in future additional advice of specialist teachers needs to be obtained in such cases;
- the managerial structure developed for the scheme proved to be particularly successful, and it could be argued that the structure could be maintained as it would be suitable to manage the expansion of the scheme so long as adequate resources can be provided. There is a strong body of opinion among coordinators, respondents and participants that this scheme should be maintained and developed, especially as the concept of basing reading clubs on particular themes and activity programmes has proved to be successful and popular and responsive to local needs and circumstances. Some club leaders indicated in future that that aspect could be strengthened by allowing clubs to select their own reading materials as the selection would then be appropriate to local needs and circumstances. Others suggested that even if the scheme could not be sustained for any reason, then the website facility for clubs should be maintained;

- the website and the blogging facility proved to be popular and useful;
- the outcomes of the work with some reluctant readers will not become immediately apparent, but there are some early indications in several instances that are very encouraging. Many club leaders could point to members who had seemingly turned a corner in terms of their ability to read as a result of their engagement with the work of the club, and to improving attitudes towards books and reading among many pupils. Even when it was not possible yet to detect improved levels of reading abilities, it was possible to detect better levels of interest in books, their subjects, and reading, and greater levels of willingness to discuss books and reading.

The response of the members is undoubtedly the most important. They were encouraged to express their views and opinions as blogs on the website, and very many did so. The combination of reading and technology proved to be successful with this age group as it reflects the willingness of the club members to have their say and to express their opinions, and by that means they also developed verbal, writing and judgement skills in a natural developmental and progressive process.

6. Partnerships and new contacts

6.1 Building on existing foundations

It would have been particularly difficult for a small central team of coordinators to organise a national campaign without the support of a good number of partners, and this was particularly the case for the National Year of Reading 2008. The brief for the team stipulated the need to work with partners – building on those partnerships already in place and creating new links. The evidence shows that the National Year of Reading achieved its objectives in this area as well.

Support for the Year came from many partners who had previously been involved in World Book Day and Quick Reads, and the collaboration of these organisations proved to be particularly valuable for the Year. Local authorities were prominent among such partners as has been noted earlier in this Report, and the contribution of the local coordinators nominated by each authority has been particularly significant as they created a range of events and activities in each county that embraced the aims and objectives of the Year.

The schools of Wales, the nursery groups of the Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin, and the play groups of the Pre-school Playgroups Association in Wales have been core partners in many of the Welsh Books Council's campaigns over many years. Special resource packs were sent to them in order to encourage them to participate in the National Year of Reading and a response outlining their intentions and their programmes was received from many of them.

The TUC in Wales is one of the more recent partners of the Welsh Books Council, and the Year of Reading provided an opportunity to develop and strengthen that partnership, enabling the key message that reading enhances life skills to reach a significant proportion of the workforce in Wales. TUC Wales represents the interests of nearly half a million workers and it has more than 1,200 union representatives who work to improve the skills of their fellow workers.

The officers of the learning services department of the TUC in Wales arranged two joint seminars for the purposes of sharing good practice among union members relating to ways in which workers can be encouraged to turn to reading for the purpose of improving their basic skills. A further opportunity to spread the message concerning the National Year of Reading, its aims, objectives and activities arranged in workplaces across Wales in support of the Year was provided at the annual conference of the movement's learning representatives. Positive evidence was received from many workplaces that the Year had been used to raise the profile of books and reading among workers and that many of these activities will be continued into the future.

The partnership with the learning services department of the TUC in Wales has been enhanced during the Year of Reading and its continuation is already apparent in future plans for World Book Day and Quick Reads schemes.

By working with the Urdd and Merched y Wawr movements, which have been active partners with the Welsh Books Council in many campaigns over the years, an opportunity was provided to raise the profile of the Year on the main stage of the Urdd National Eisteddfod when each stage winner was given a gift of a book token to mark the Year, and at several of the Merched y Wawr national events during the year. Further reference was made to the Year in the Urdd's publications and Merched y Wawr was one of the organisations which contributed to the Give a Book Week as they collaborated with Honno Welsh Women's Press and donated a collection of books to the Women's Shelter charitable organisation in Wales. A number of other Welsh charities also contributed to the Give a Book Week campaign by displaying posters in the windows of their shops in towns across Wales.

The Welsh Video Network is one of the most sophisticated networks in the world, and its work includes distributing and supporting videoconferencing facilities and studios to every Higher and Further education establishment in Wales. The Welsh Video Network has been one of World Book Day partners for several years and it was therefore natural for them to arrange sessions during the National Year of Reading which brought authors and young people together via videoconferencing. One of the Network's events was the 2,008th event held under the auspices of the National Year of Reading during the Year, and the event that ensured that the Year met the target set for it in terms of events for the Year. That event was the outcome of a further partnership arrangement – between the Network and the library forum for Higher Education in Wales (WHELP).

6.2 New partnerships

Support for the National Year of Reading was also obtained from a range of new partners that included businesses and charities. One of the most enthusiastic business supporters of the Year was the steel-maker Corus, which employs more than 8,000 people across Wales. Some of the company's executives saw the National Year of Reading as an opportunity to organise activity for the workforce that would not only promote reading as a leisure pastime, and as a contribution to their partnership with the trade unions to raise skill levels among the workers, but also as a means of ensuring that the company met its social and corporate responsibilities. With the support of Accent Press, some 1,500 books were distributed free of charge among the Corus workforce, and by that means an opportunity was provided to spread the message about the skills that could be accrued through reading, whether it be reading for pleasure or for business purposes, to a new audience.

The formation of one of the other new partnerships followed a request for information from the director of Llamau, a registered charity in south Wales that provides a range of services for young people and wives who have certain disadvantages and may be homeless. The charity was keen to be part of the Year and was seeking ideas and advice as to how to implement them among the young people in their care. A set of Quick Reads was provided for them and a workshop was arranged for all Llamau service users in the ten local authorities where Llamau offers services.

A short report on the seminar was obtained and it noted that

- the participants were between the ages of 16 and 18;
- there were more male participants than females;
- some had declared little or no interest in books, but a good deal of interest was generated at the event;
- the books generated a discussion about the value of stories and of books in general;
- the fact that some of the activity was group-based had given the young people greater confidence in the way that they considered their feelings, their thoughts and their own reading abilities;
- group leaders believed that the session had provided a valuable opportunity to discuss important matters in a way that was helpful and supportive;
- the session had shown that reading could be presented as a normal part of life rather than something associated with discipline at school.

There is valuable evidence of the value of the session:

‘I was quite impressed how well I did reading it out loud to D (staff member). Often I have trouble reading and school made me stutter because I couldn’t read well.’

‘I feel better reading it out loud so someone can listen to me and it helps me concentrate and learn.’

‘I liked the book because the print was quite big. I can’t read small printing. The page was nice and clear so I didn’t get lost. I know that I will have to get better at my reading to help my son when he’s born. I’m not very good at reading now.’

‘It was alright. Some of the words were a bit complicated because I’m not very good with my reading. I would never have picked up a book like that unless you had brought it in for me. It was good but I would like shorter stories.’

‘I liked reading the whole book because it was short enough for me to think I could finish it.’

Following the success of the workshop held under the auspices of the National Year of Reading, the charity has organised further activity at the request of its young clientele. There will undoubtedly be an opportunity related to the World Book Day and to the Quick Reads initiative in future.

Local authorities have a responsibility for their Looked After Children. These are children whose parents cannot care for them for various reasons, either temporarily or permanently. Some of the children are cared for by other family members, some may be cared for by foster carers and others in care homes. Many of the children will have been affected by difficult experiences in their lives and serious instances of harm, which could include physical or sexual abuse. Some will have handicaps and complex needs, and a small number will be in care on account of having committed crimes.

Every authority in Wales has a coordinator for educational schemes and the educational needs of Looked After Children and those who are about to leave the care regime. Because the coordinators of Looked After Children services are working to ensure that they can enhance the achievements of the children, improving their literacy achievements is an important facet of that work. It was particularly appropriate, therefore, that the Welsh Assembly Government had given £5,000 to each coordinator to spend on that particular aspect of the National Year of Reading.

To date feedback has been received from seven authorities in Wales and it records a variety of activities and schemes, such as

- buying a collection of books to set up a library in a care home;
- purchasing fiction for a particular secondary school in order to improve the reading ability of Looked After Children who are pupils at the school;
- organising a Summer Literacy campaign for children and their carers;
- purchasing collections of materials relating to 'emotional literacy' to be used in schools for work with individual children;
- providing a guide on developing children's reading for foster parents, to be distributed through schools;
- using book tokens as prizes to reward improvements in reading skills;
- creating specialised collections of books for tutors working for the authority;
- organising a book fair in cooperation with the library service and a local book shop, with an appropriate collection of materials including materials for reluctant readers and children with low reading abilities. Each child was given a generous book token to spend at the fair. The day's events were further supplemented by organising story sessions and an opportunity to meet authors;
- organising a visit for a group of children to a book shop in the company of Cardiff Blues rugby players in order to promote reading among the children;
- subscribing to the 'Letterbox' scheme;
- organising craft, literature and drama sessions for Year 6 pupils in order to prepare them for transfer to secondary school;
- setting up the Happy Reading Scheme to promote reading in foster homes.

By means of this grant to promote work among Looked After Children, the National Year of Reading was provided with a special opportunity to be more inclusive and arrangements are already in hand to send World Book Day 2009 packs to the local authority coordinators throughout Wales.

This evidence points to the fact that the National Year of Reading endeavoured to address the needs of communities and groups regarded as being difficult to reach in terms of inclusivity and in terms of their reading habits, and future work should build on this experience as soon as possible.

7. The publicity campaign

There were key elements to this aspect of the work of the National Year of Reading:

- **ensuring that the brand and image of the Year was given a high profile and would be increasingly familiar in the public conscience**

The aim was to ensure that every relevant activity and every resource and material produced for the Year, or which was produced by it, bore the Year's logo. To that end the primary focus was delegated to all local organisers and coordinators who were asked to ensure that every item produced or used was recorded. A very wide range of publicity and branding materials was produced – balloons, posters, stickers, sweat bands, T-shirts, post cards, book marks, book tokens, sports bags and footballs. More than 70,000 items were distributed at certain times of the Year. To that total should be added the million and a half items that were distributed by local coordinators and organisers of events, and which carried the logo;

- **spreading the message at conferences and major national events**

By advertising the Year at major events such as the National Eisteddfod, the annual general meeting and summer and May fairs of Merched y Wawr, the Royal Welsh Show, the Hay Festival and so on, a potential audience of more than half a million people was alerted to the Year and its events, and by adding the Christmas advertising campaign organised by the Welsh Books Council and which carried the National Year of Reading branding, that total increases to more than 1,400,000 people;

- **ensuring that the Year was given as much publicity as possible by the media in Wales in a creative and positive manner, concentrating on raising the profile of reading and books**

This was a task that demanded the services of experts in the field and the PR company FBA was commissioned to undertake a range of tasks in the field, including coordinating all press and public relations work relating to the National Year of Reading, on behalf of the Welsh Books Council.

In its end of year report the company calculated (through the acknowledged methods adopted by companies in the field):

- that 121 articles and features had been placed in various media that would reach a combined potential audience of 8.5 million readers in Wales;
- that the equivalent value of the public relations and publicity thus created was £467,303;

- that the company had prepared resources for 33 radio and television interviews that could reach a potential audience of 5.4 million, and that 53 articles and features had been prepared for the Internet. Press coverage had been obtained nationally and locally, in both English and Welsh.

The company also worked closely with the organisers of local events, and advised on the most effective means of organising events and achieving press coverage. The company was also responsible for steering the work on the creation of the National Year of Reading website in Wales.

The company reached all the targets that was set for it.

8. The National Year of Reading website

The Steering Committee for the Year was strongly of the opinion that creating a website was a necessary and important development. Additional financial resources were provided for the purpose.

This was a task that was difficult to undertake under normal purchasing procedures within the time constraints imposed by the Year, and it was therefore decided to seek solutions that could deliver a website as soon as possible so that it could be offered as a facility to those who were to be participants in the Year's work. An arrangement whereby an existing web service could accommodate the Year's site was initially sought, but this arrangement proved not to be suitable or acceptable, and therefore FBA, who had won the publicity and public relations contract, was commissioned to administer the work of creating and developing the website.

A temporary solution was made available by March 2008 in order to buy time in which to complete a fully functional website that would meet the needs of the Year. The temporary facility was adequate in terms of disseminating information and recording events. The full interactive system became operational by June 2008 and it demonstrated its value as:

- a medium that facilitated the gathering and dissemination of information and for analysis purposes;
- a medium that could enhance the aims and objectives of the National Year of Reading and could encourage participation by offering ideas and themes and by providing supplementary and support materials and services;
- a means to facilitate and enhance particular campaigns and events, such as 'Give a Book Week', 'Reading Communities' and the '08 Clubs', and in particular and specific ways.

Various references have been made to these functions and services, and to their value and success, throughout this Report.

Between May and the end of December 2008 some 800,000 hits had been counted on the site, and the hits were still continuing at the rate of some 2,500 visits per week at the end of December.

Even though the website was linked directly to specific activity, events and projects held during 2008, it is possible to arrive at specific conclusions regarding the value of an interactive facility of this kind. Web technology has many merits and values, in particular in the context of work with children and young people; it is an effective means of communication and it is a valuable management tool. But the Year has shown that it is necessary to select very carefully how the technology is used and in what contexts, and which audiences should be exposed to interactivity.

The National Year of Reading website is to be archived as it contains much important and valuable information, and it is very appropriate that the Welsh Books Council should transfer some of the functions and facilities of the website to its central web facility in order to develop certain functions and services further. It is important, however, to identify suitable resources to ensure that the transfer and sustainability process is successfully completed, and that the parts of the National Year of Reading website remain accessible, vibrant and attractive.

9. A consideration of value for money issues

There are a number of pertinent considerations in the context of assessing whether the National Year of Reading 2008, and the manner in which it was administered, offered good value for money:

- the Year more than delivered against the targets it was set;
- the Year's work was delivered on budget, and consistent, robust and effective control and monitoring procedures were adopted;
- all the specific events and activities stipulated by the Welsh Assembly Government were delivered by the Welsh Books Council in accordance with its remit;
- by maintaining regular and close working relationships with all partners and contributors, and by offering support when necessary, the elements of risk that could have prejudiced the successful completion of the Year's work were closely monitored and removed;
- by working through partnerships, particularly with the local authorities, the Year generated practical and valuable support, evident in time, kind and resource allocations, but it was not the wish of the authorities to calculate or reclaim those contributions;
- the proportion of the total financial award made by the Welsh Assembly Government spent on the administration of the National Year of Reading 2008 was reasonable – a little under 17% of the total budget. The finance was largely expended on the main events and activities as stipulated in the remit. It should also be noted that some of the monies allocated to administration were actually spent on directly supporting events and activities because the small team comprising the Year Coordinator and the Administrative Assistant were directly involved in many of these;
- the Welsh Books Council was able to offer additional support and expertise from within its own staff and resources to ensure the success of certain key events

and activities when that was necessary. Again the value of that input was not calculated or reclaimed;

- resources were spent wisely on augmenting and supplementing the coordinating team and the Council's expertise when necessary by means of sub-contracting certain activities and by commissioning certain activities from other organisations and individuals. By utilising competitive tendering procedures, value for money was a key consideration;
- additional support and financial resources were secured for some of the events and projects of the National Year of Reading in 2008. It is possible to establish the value of some of those additional contributions, such as that from CyMAL, but the sum total of other contributions – had they been calculated and priced – would have been considerable;
- the levels of participation in events and the extent of market penetration and the 'reach' of the Year's activities achieved by a range of means and methods are particularly satisfactory and it is doubtful whether it could have been possible to obtain better value for money from other approaches;
- there is no evidence of concern regarding displacement of core activities among any of the contributors to the year's work or of concerns over additional burden of work, but there is evidence that shows that the involvement in the year's activities proved wholly beneficial to partners and participants alike.

It is therefore appropriate to note that the campaigns conducted under the banner of the National Year of Reading in 2008 show how it is possible to make a significant difference even with a relatively modest budget, and how it is possible to generate and obtain significant interest and very satisfactory levels of response, both quantitative and qualitative.

10. The legacy of the National Year of Reading 2008

10.1 Sustainability

Reference has been made several times in this Report to the fact that the Steering Committee that provided the initial direction for the National Year of Reading 2008 sought to emphasise that sustainability should be an important consideration for the Year's work.

As such the National Year of Reading for 2008 developed practical, achievable and substantial programmes of activity, in particular:

- a wide-ranging and interesting programme that was widely supported by participants of all kinds, and a programme that provided enjoyment pleasure and satisfaction. The lives of many people were made richer by participation in the Year;
- the Year provided models of good practice and created a fund of experience so that similar work could be delivered on a regular basis with confidence and the knowledge that it would have the necessary impact. Many local authorities and participants in the 2008 Year have already indicated their intentions and aspirations

to continue to provide similar and suitable events and programmes. Many communities and individuals have also expressed their expectations that the work should continue;

- the organisational and managerial skills of the organisers and participants have been further developed by their contributions to the Year in 2008, and it is a reasonable expectation that the promotion of reading and books in future could be richer and even more effective;
- there has been experimentation and innovation in the activities and events organised during 2008, and a number of significant challenges addressed, such as establishing reading clubs for young people and encouraging particular hard-to-reach communities and groups to engage with reading and books. Ambitious public relations and publicity campaigns have been conducted and proved to be successful judging by market penetration and participation and satisfaction rates. Targets were either met or exceeded. Much has been learnt from those campaigns that will be immensely valuable in future when further programmes should be organised;
- once more the value of partnership working has been proved – it is an effective way of reaching targets and realising ambitious aspirations. Without the contribution of the local authorities and their workforces and specialists, and the contribution of many organisations of different kinds, the National Year of Reading 2008 would not have been such a success. The same should be said about the contribution of voluntary community leaders – they made an immense contribution to the realisation of the partnership programme, and without them it is very unlikely that the targets could have been met or exceeded;
- the Year proved that Wales has a remarkable range of abilities and skills in areas related and relevant to campaigns to promote books and reading.

10.2 Recommendations for the future

Even though the timetable offered for the National Year of Reading in 2008 was constrained, and even though the budget allocated was relatively small, because the levels of public response and satisfaction were so good, every effort should be made to build on the successful and sustainable elements of the Year. Expenditure on such schemes could be justified on the basis of the success achieved in 2008. Specifically:

- the 'Give a Book Week' could become a regular feature of the annual World Book Day in Wales, and resources could be allocated for a similar publicity and public relations campaign which should be an essential part of any book and reading campaign in future;
- because the experience gained from creating 'Reading Communities' has been disseminated across Wales during 2008, and in order to build on that experience, there is justification for providing resources to extend the model to at least one authority each year, and that should ensure that the authorities themselves could eventually assume responsibility for similar projects based on the 'Reading Communities' model in subsequent years. There is substantial evidence to show that the authorities themselves wish to proceed on that basis because they believe that considerable benefits accrue. However, it is necessary to provide the

necessary resources and to provide central support through the Welsh Books Council in order to achieve success;

- because a successful administrative structure has already been developed for the formation and support of a network of reading clubs for young people across Wales, a suitable budget should be provided so that support services and materials can continue to be provided and current enthusiasm and commitment sustained.