



Fishguard & Goodwick Town Council

Cyngor Tref Abergwaun ac Wdig

WELSH LANGUAGE SCHEME POLICY

Welsh Language Scheme prepared under the Welsh Language Act 1993

1. OPENING STATEMENT

The Fishguard and Goodwick Town Council has adopted the principle that in the conduct of public business in Wales it will treat Welsh and English on a basis of equality. This scheme sets out how the Council will implement that principle in the provision of services to the public in the Fishguard and Goodwick area.

The Council recognises that members of the public can express their views and needs better in their preferred language, that enabling them to use their preferred language is a matter of good practice rather than a concession and that the denial of that right could place members of the public at a real disadvantage. The Council will therefore offer the public the right to choose which language to use in dealings with the Council.

The Council aims:

- To enable everyone who receives or uses the Council's services or contributes to the democratic process to do so, through the medium of Welsh or English, according to personal choice.
- To help promote the use of the Welsh Language in the wider community.

2. INTRODUCTION TO FISHGUARD AND GOODWICK TOWN COUNCIL

Amongst the Council's main duties are to:

- consider planning matters;
- suggest improvements regarding highways;
- work with the police to safeguard the community;
- provide Christmas lights every year;
- provide financial assistance for various voluntary organisations and charities;
- appoint representatives to numerous local and outside bodies.

There are a number of social, cultural and community groups that play a prominent part in the life of the community. The Council is working to promote community development and social activities and respond to local needs to improve the standard of life in the area.

The Council has fourteen elected members. Three members are Welsh speaking. The Clerk works part time from the office. The Town Clerk is not bilingual.

- The area has 25 percent Welsh speakers,
- The following community groups give a focus and context for Welsh service - Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin, yr Urdd, 5 Welsh Chapels - Hermon, Tabernacle, Pentwr, Ebenezer and Goedwig; 2 Church of Wales and 1 Catholic churches, Cymdeithas Cymrodorion, C.Y.D. and Young Farmers Club. All local Primary Schools have the opportunity to learn Welsh. 3 Categories - Welsh for Welsh speaking families, Welsh for one parent Welsh speaking family and Welsh for totally English speaking families.

3. SERVICE PLANNING AND DELIVERY

3.1. New Policies and Initiatives

3.1.1. In devising new policies and initiatives the Council will:

- assess the linguistic effect of any new policies and initiatives and ensure that they are consistent with the Welsh Language Scheme.
- promote and facilitate the use of Welsh wherever possible and will move closer to implementing the principle of equality fully at every opportunity.
- consult with the Welsh Language Commissioner in advance regarding proposals that will affect the scheme, or the scheme of any other body. The scheme will not be altered without the Commissioners agreement.
- ensure that those involved in formulating policy will be aware of the Scheme, and of the Council's responsibilities under the Welsh Language Act 1993.
- ensure that the measures contained in the Scheme are applied to new policies and initiatives when they are implemented.

3.2. Standards of Quality

3.2.1. Services provided in English or Welsh will be of an equally high standard and equally prompt.

4. DEALING WITH WELSH SPEAKING PUBLIC

4.1. Written Communication

4.1.1. The Council will welcome correspondence in either English or Welsh.

- 4.1.2. Correspondence through the medium of Welsh will not in itself, lead to any unreasonable delay
- 4.1.3. All correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh.
- 4.1.4. All correspondence following a telephone or face-to-face conversation in Welsh or a meeting where it was established that Welsh is the preferred language of the person, although the discussion may not have been held through the medium of Welsh, will be in Welsh.
- 4.1.5. All correspondence with a member of the public will be initiated in his/her preferred language if known.
- 4.1.6. The Council will make arrangements to translate correspondence as needed in order to respond to correspondence promptly and in the original language.
- 4.1.7. The Council's official headed paper will include a statement in both languages making it clear that correspondence is welcome in either Welsh or English.
- 4.1.8. All circular and standard letters to the public will be bilingual.

4.2. Telephone Calls

- 4.2.1. As the Clerk is not bilingual, the Council cannot offer a bilingual greeting, nor deal with calls in Welsh from the outset. However when a member of the public wishes to speak Welsh, the Clerk will offer to arrange for a Welsh speaking Council member to return the call as soon as a bilingual member can be contacted, or explain that the individual is welcome to continue with the call in English or send in their enquiry in written form in Welsh.
- 4.2.2. When the Clerk's post becomes vacant, it will be advertised confirming that bilingual skills will be advantageous so that the Council can offer a bilingual service to the public.

4.3. Public Meetings organised by or on behalf of the Council

- 4.3.1. Any public meeting that is held to discuss the Welsh Language, Welsh medium education, Council Tax or any information relating to local elections/by-elections, will be bilingual.
- 4.3.2. All publicity for public meetings will be bilingual, and will invite those attending to notify the Clerk of their language choice, at least 14 days in advance, so that appropriate translation arrangements can be made for non Welsh-speakers.
- 4.3.3. If it is evident at the beginning of the meeting that ALL those present speak Welsh, the meeting will be held in Welsh.
- 4.3.4. The Council will provide translating facilities for non-Welsh speakers, according to need, for public meetings arranged by or on behalf of the Council.
- 4.3.5. At least one staff member, or an Elected Member, will be present at public meetings to welcome the public and to deal with enquiries, questions or comments in Welsh, provided prior notice is given.

4.3.6 Any written material such as leaflets or acetates that are used in public meetings called to discuss the Welsh Language, Welsh medium education, Council Tax or any information regarding local elections/by-elections will be bilingual.

4.4. Council Meetings

[namely the Council's regular meetings, which are open to the public, but where the public are not part of the meeting.]

4.4.1. The Council's meetings will be bilingual - on request.

4.4.2. The notice and agenda for the Council's meetings will be bilingual - on request.

4.4.3. The minutes will normally be in English or bilingual - on request.

4.4.4. The Council will respond to requests for information in relation to the minutes, or sections of the minutes in the preferred language of the individual.

4.5. Face-to-Face Meetings with the Public

4.5.1. Although the Clerk is not bilingual, the Council welcomes meetings with the public in either Welsh or English, and the Clerk will ensure that appropriate arrangements are taken to enable any member of the public who wishes to discuss matters in Welsh, to do so with a bilingual Member of the Council.

4.6. Other Dealings with the Public

4.6.1. When the Council contacts the public via modern technology, namely computers, e-mail, Facebook and web site, this information will be available in Welsh for the public on request.

5. THE COUNCIL'S PUBLIC FACE

5.1. Corporate Identity

5.1.1. The Council's name is "Cyngor Tref Abergwaun ac Wdig Fishguard & Goodwick Town Council."

5.1.2. The Council has already adopted a bilingual corporate identity.

5.1.3. The name and address of the Council will appear bilingually on official headed paper, fax papers and compliment slips, [web site – if relevant], and any other promotional material.

5.2. Signage

5.2.1. All new information signs or those replacing previous signs on Council property will be bilingual, as will any other public information signs for which the Council is responsible. The two languages will appear side by side, with the Welsh version appearing to the left. Where it is not practical, the Welsh version will appear first. The size, quality, legibility and prominence of text will be equal in Welsh and English.

5.3. Publishing and Printing Material

- 5.3.1. All publications aimed at the public, such as documents, and explanatory material dealing with the Welsh Language, Welsh medium education, Council Tax, information about local elections/by-elections and grants forms will be bilingual with both language versions forming one document. The versions will be printed side-by-side where possible to facilitate easy cross-reference, distribution and offer language choice.
- 5.3.2. If Welsh and English versions are published separately they will appear simultaneously, be distributed together and be equally accessible.
- 5.3.3. All press releases will normally be in English and will include a contact name for Welsh language interviews if needed.
- 5.3.4. Advertising and publicity activities dealing with the Welsh Language, Welsh medium education, Council Tax and information about local elections/by-elections will be bilingual.
- 5.3.5. Council advertisements and notices dealing with the Welsh Language, Welsh medium education, Council Tax and information about local elections/by-elections to be placed in the press, on notice boards or any other medium will be bilingual.
- 5.3.7. Job advertisements will appear bilingually in English/bilingual publications and in Welsh only in Welsh language publications with a footnote in English.

5.4. Statutory and promotional functions

- 5.4.1 The Council will encourage bilingual statutory and promotional functions at every opportunity.
- 5.4.2. When the Council is consulted on the naming of streets, developments and new estates, the Council will support the use of standard or indigenous names when appropriate. Where only minor differences exist between the Welsh and English spelling of place, street, ward, or community names, the Council will support the adoption of the Welsh version. The Council will ask the opinion of the Welsh Place Names Standardisation Panel in cases of uncertainty.

5.5. Services by Other parties

- 5.5.1. Any arrangements made by the Council to use a third party to deliver services to the public on its behalf will comply with the specific requirements in the Scheme as outlined by the Council.
- 5.5.2. The Third party will need to confirm that it has complied with the relevant aspects of the Scheme by, letter if applicable.

6. IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING THE SCHEME

6.1. Staffing

6.1.1. The Clerk of the Council is not bilingual. When that post becomes vacant it will be noted in the advert that bilingual skills would be advantageous for the post to ensure that the Council can implement the clauses contained in this Scheme.

6.2. Administrative Arrangements

6.2.1. This scheme has the full support of the Council.

6.2.2. The Clerk will be responsible for implementing the Scheme on a day-to-day basis within the Council. According to need, the Clerk will ensure that guidelines and instructions will be available to all who are involved in the implementation of the scheme.

6.3. The Translation Service

6.3.1. The Clerk will be responsible for the written translation needs of the Council, and will also be responsible for the standard of all Welsh text produced by an external translator.

6.3.2. If it is the decision of Council that simultaneous translation services are needed, the Clerk will be responsible for arranging the necessary facilities.

6.4. Monitoring

6.4.1. Responsibility for monitoring the Scheme will rest with the Clerk of the Council.

6.4.4. The Council will welcome suggestions from the public regarding improvements to any aspect of the Scheme (via letter or telephone communication).

6.5. Publicity

6.5.1. The Council will publicise the Scheme.

6.6. Contacting the Council

6.6.1. Any comments, complaints or suggestions regarding the Scheme should be addressed to:

Mrs. Catherine Bannister,
Clerk to the Fishguard and Goodwick Town Council,
Town Hall,
Market Square,
Fishguard,
Pembrokeshire
SA65 9HE
e-mail: clerk@fishguardgoodwick-tc.gov.wales
Tel: 01348 874406

Timetable: Upon implementation of the approved document.