

Meeting to discuss using Carnegie House as Anchor Institute for the National Poetry Library of Wales

Monday 9th January 2023 at Carnegie House and Remote

Present:

Cllr. Allison Felton – Bridgend Town Council (Carnegie House)

Dawn Elliott – Acting Community Engagement and Events Manager (Carnegie House)

Cllr. Dr. Ben Gwalchmai - Campaign Leader & Chief Organiser (Remote via Teams)

Overview

The National Poetry Library of Wales (NPLW) is looking to house 30 – 35,000 poetry publications, some of which will be in the medium of Welsh, in a South Wales Anchor Library.

These can be housed in 3 winding cabinets (see image below) which are approximately 3m x 1.5 metres. An additional metre will be required per cabinet to allow the winding and expanding mechanism to work. The NPLW would also consider alternative shelving if it better suited the space available.



The NPLW are seeking to apply for £2 – 3m funding from the Welsh Government to set up 3 anchor institutes in Wales. Locations in Conwy and Welshpool have been agreed. Meetings have been held with the Deputy Minister for Culture, Dawn Bowden MS who has asked for NPLW to provide a detailed proposal to Welsh Government ahead of a formal project bid.

The funding will cover the set up required at each location and will fund one or 2 librarians at each site at a salary of £35k, which will be funded by the project.

What requirements will be needed?

- Space for the 3 winding cabinets
- A table, chair, electric and Wi-Fi for the librarian
- A table and chairs for users.

It is estimated that the South Wales anchor library will receive 7,500 – 10,000 visitors per month. This includes visitors who will visit the library to use and borrow books and visitors attending events put on by the NPLW and various stakeholder organisations e.g. book launches, Poet Laureate events and poetry evenings.

The NPLW will pay Bridgend Town Council for use of the space and this could be in the form of a monthly or annual fee.

What will be the impact for Bridgend Town Council Staff?

Minimal input will be required from BTC staff. The NPLW will write the bid and all they require from Bridgend Town Council at this stage is an expression of interest if we would like to be considered as the southern anchor. The NPLW have insurance which covers the books. Any events will be organised by the NPLW or external stakeholders and they would liaise with BTC staff as would any external body hiring a room for an event.

Opening Hours

The anchor library can have flexible opening hours to fit in with the use of the building for other arts and community use.

Potential Locations for the Library in Carnegie House

- Downstairs at the back of the hall
- Upstairs in The Board Room
- Upstairs in the Chamber

Timescales

The NPLW wish to submit a proposal to Welsh Government by the end of the financial year – March 2023. If it is agreed, a bid submitted and funding allocated, it will take at least a year before the library would be ready to open, so the library is unlikely to open until at least Spring 2024.

Additional Information

Cllr. Dr. Ben Gwalchmai - Campaign Leader & Chief Organiser is willing to talk to any councillors or committees who may like more information about the project.

An expression of interest from Bridgend Town Council to be part of the project would not commit the council, but would mean ongoing consultation and (if we remained interested) considering the final proposal.