

Using Welsh Effectively in Bilingual Meetings

Introduction

The Welsh Language Standards give the public, students and staff the right to use Welsh in meetings. See the guide *Meetings* for details about what kind of meeting this applies to. Sometimes it will be possible to hold these meetings solely through the medium of Welsh but at other times the meeting will need to be bilingual. This guide is relevant to meetings where a simultaneous translator is necessary in order to enable this right to use Welsh.

University Committees

A list of University committees that operate bilingually can be seen in the document *Using Welsh at Work in Aberystwyth University*, but there are other committees also that must be held bilingually if the members so wish.¹

Arranging a Simultaneous Translator

Please contact the Centre for Welsh Language Services – translation@aber.ac.uk at least 5 working days in advance to arrange simultaneous translation. If the committee dates are decided well in advance please contact the Centre also in advance as this will facilitate the translation arrangements.

Papers for the Meeting

The agenda and any papers and PowerPoint presentations should be sent to the simultaneous translator some days beforehand so that he/she can become familiar with the subjects that are likely to arise in the meeting. If the documentation is bilingual, please send both versions to the simultaneous translator.

Before the Meeting

The chair or one of the other officers should aim to arrive a little early to the meeting in order to advise the translator on the best location to place the equipment so that they will be able to see and hear everybody but will not disturb the meeting.

The Role of the Chair

The Chair has a key role to play in increasing the use of Welsh and in normalising the practice of holding bilingual meetings. The aim when chairing a bilingual meeting is to encourage everybody to use their preferred language and make it completely natural and easy for people to use Welsh in new and varied situations. It is the chair's responsibility to establish a bilingual environment for the meeting and create conditions that will resist the tendency to turn to English. The chair, by his/her attitude, can show that it is completely natural for a Welsh speaker to speak in Welsh

¹ See the Guide *Meetings*.

and that it is not impolite to speak Welsh in the presence of monolingual English speakers.

Chairs who can speak Welsh

When a bilingual person is chairing a meeting, ideally he/she should chair in Welsh. This gives a boost to the language because it normalises the use of Welsh and the translation service from the offset, and it establishes the status of Welsh in the discussions giving a positive sign and encouragement to Welsh speaking contributors. 'Chairing in Welsh' means steering the discussion in Welsh and responding in Welsh to the discussion even when the discussion and questions are in English.

Remember that non-Welsh speakers will not be under any disadvantage because the translator will make sure that every body can fully partake in the meeting.

These considerations are important as they assist in making Welsh speakers feel comfortable and demonstrates to them that both languages are being treated equally and that they are welcome to use Welsh should they wish to contribute.

When chairing a bilingual meeting you should

- Welcome everyone to the meeting in Welsh and in English.
- Explain that this is a bilingual meeting and that everyone is welcome to contribute in either Welsh or English.
- Introduce the translator. You should make sure that everyone who needs them has earphones and that they are working properly.
- Remember that the Chair and everyone else may answer points and comments made in *Welsh and in English* in Welsh. In a bilingual meeting nobody should consider that this is impolite.
- Switch the language of the meeting back to Welsh if there is a tendency for the discussion to continue in English after an English contribution.
- Remember that the Chair may chair solely in Welsh if they wish. Usually this will boost the confidence of the other Welsh speakers.
- Keep an eye on the members wearing earphones – if they are expected to give a reply they should be given time to put on and take off their earphones to listen and speak.
- Make sure that people speak in turn, this will facilitate the translator's task.
- Close the meeting in Welsh and in English.

Non-Welsh speaking Chairs

Even if the Chair does not speak Welsh, he/she still has an important role in making sure that the people who are present in the meeting and wish to speak Welsh feel that they are welcome to do so. Remember that the non-Welsh speakers will not be

under any disadvantage as the translator will make sure that every body can fully partake in the meeting.

- If possible, open the meeting in Welsh by welcoming everybody in Welsh. e.g. *“Prynhawn da a chroeso i chi gyd - Good afternoon and welcome”*
- Announce that the meeting is bilingual and that people are welcome to use their preferred language as there is a translation service available.
- Introduce the translator and make sure that everyone who needs them has earphones and that they are working properly.
- Make sure that people speak in turn, this will facilitate the translator’s task.
- If possible, close the meeting in Welsh e.g. *“Dyna ddiwedd y cyfarfod. Diolch am ddod. – We’ll finish the meeting now. Thank you for coming.”*

Useful Phrases

Agor cyfarfod / Opening a meeting

Croeso i'r cyfarfod	Welcome to the meeting
Croeso i Brifysgol Aberystwyth	Welcome to Aberystwyth University
Diolch i chi am ddod..	Thank you for coming.
Bore da a chroeso.	Good morning and welcome
Croeso cynnes i...	A warm welcome to...
Ga' i gyflwyno... i chi.	May I introduce ... to you.
Mae Mr ... yn mynd i siarad am...	Mr is going to talk about...

Cau cyfarfod / Closing a meeting

Diolch am ddangos eich cefnogaeth i ni y bore yma.	Thank you for showing us your support this morning.
Diolch i chi am gymryd rhan yn y cyfarfod heddiw.	Thank you for taking part in the meeting today