

Ymgynghoriad cyhoeddus ar Wasanaethau Dwyieithog cyn y broses ddeddfu

Tystiolaeth gan Dave Taylor

Hello,

The whole system in relation to the Welsh language is wrong and extremely wasteful.

The EU has learned the hard lessons and are seriously considering operating in a lingua franca, to reduce the cost and the time delays due to translation. They also recognise the importance in avoiding any issues arising from incorrect translations of rules and laws (with all the many nuances in the legal languages of every country). We here in Wales have just had a fiasco where one AM escaped being banned because he used an out of date Welsh language website, as opposed to English one. The Welsh one had not been updated, what a different scene it would have been if they were thought to be the same but the argument was about what exactly did clauses A,B,C mean in each version

The assembly and related bodies need to learn the same lessons the EU has and accept that 80% or more of the nation cannot speak Welsh and have no need or desire to do so.

The majority of quoted huge numbers who have been taught Welsh (many compulsorily in EM schools) do not use it after leaving school.

So, as is well realised the numbers who do speak it compared to the numbers who in theory could speak it are vastly different. Even the ex culture minister admitted this fact last year in an interview on tv.

I have also read that because of the differences in the Welsh language in various areas of Wales, there has to be a committee look into defining a "legal" version of Welsh, presumably to try and avoid confusion and expensive legal cases.

It is high time we the public were told the true cost of all this politicisation and propagandising in relation to the language, that is the money spent directly or indirectly by any ministerial department on the Welsh language (or it's favourite guise culture). This is money which should have been spent on essential services – education, economy, health, infrastructure/transport – does anyone seriously claim the language is an essential service.

Then we come to the matter of areas of Wales who refuse by one means or another to supply EM education for parents who want it. I read the other day about a lady who is sending her child to an EM school in the next county (11m away) and has to pay the transport cost, but her neighbour's child attends a WM school 17m away for free, this is rampant discrimination, this is not hearsay I can supply a link to her letter.

In discussion last year relating to the Welsh language act and the appointment of a WL commissioner there were these simple statements.

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*We have considered carefully the aims and objectives of the proposed Measure as set out in paragraph 3.10 of the Explanatory Memorandum. However, in our view there is a clear statement of principle missing from the proposed Measure. We believe that an overarching statement needs to be incorporated into the proposed Measure clearly stating that the purpose of the legislation is to promote and develop the Welsh language, **consistent with retaining the support and goodwill of non-Welsh speakers**. Such a statement would act as a benchmark against which the success of the wider aims and objectives of the proposed Measure (as set out in paragraph 3.10 of the Explanatory Memorandum) should be judged.*

You have spectacularly failed on that one.

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*We also strongly believe that in a nation in which two languages are spoken widely, both must be treated equally. [Paragraph 168] Accordingly, we recommend that section 1 of the proposed Measure is replaced by a clear statement regarding the official status of our languages, which could read as follows: **english and Welsh are the official languages of Wales, and have equal validity and status**.*

Of course that did not happen - Another spectacular failure.

At the same time Betsan Powys wrote on her blog

Take Rhodri Morgan's point. The ex-First Minister speaks Welsh. I think it's fair to say he's regarded by language campaigners as having a blind spot where the language is concerned. They argue he's bent over backwards over the years not to appear too pro-the-language and has now found his joints have stiffened - in a position where he has, perhaps, gone further the other way than he'd ever intended.

He would argue that's the paranoid nonsense of a noisy few. He has simply done his job and has always considered all sides of the argument that still lives on, if not rages on, around the language.

This morning he was doing that job: scrutinising the proposed Welsh language measure. He was interested in the role of the Welsh language

Commissioner. If his or her duty is, partly, to promote equality between the English and Welsh language in Wales then did that mean in some areas like the Lleyn Peninsula, where Welsh is the majority language, that the Commissioner would be expected to intervene to ensure the English language was on an equal footing with Welsh?

Surely that should be 'some parts of' the Lleyn Peninsula? A reminder that Mr Morgan takes his Summer holiday in Mwnt, not further up the coast in Abersoch.

The laconic look, the pause. This was not the way in which the Heritage Minister had considered the Commissioner's role. In general terms the whole thrust of the proposed measure is in the other direction, in promoting the Welsh language so that it is treated equally with the English language. After all the Welsh language is the minority language by quite some distance in Wales.

Yes, yes, Mr Morgan knew that. In general that was, of course, perfectly true. But in areas where English speakers are in a minority, did the Heritage Minister see the Commissioner's role as coming to the aid of English speaking families who feel their language is not being treated equally with the majority language on their doorstep: Welsh?

And Mr Morgan wasn't giving up. He put it another way: was the duty to promote equality between the two languages, as it is laid out in the current measure, going to "place the Commissioner in a difficult position?" In other words if the point of the exercise is to promote the Welsh language - not give English language speakers an opportunity to turn to this new Welsh law to argue their own case in their own, specific and rare communities - shouldn't those who've drafted the measure have chosen their words more carefully? The Heritage Minister had not thought of the Commissioner's role "in the way you describe it" but if there is an ambiguity, "we'll look at it".

And tomorrow morning Alun Ffred Jones will look in the paper and see a letter from a dozen or so distinguished barristers and lawyers condemning the proposed Welsh language measure in some detail as inadequate.

The message? You asked for proper scrutiny. You asked the people of Wales to comment on this proposed Measure.

Guess what Mr Jones, you got it.

Of course instead of accepting that such an idea would be sensible and fair, Alun Ffred looked at it and changed it. As a result English speakers in these rare areas are ridden over roughshod, tough luck sort of thing, HOW IS THIS EQUALITY?.

It is self evident due to legislation of this nature Wales is becoming unicultural and partly bilingual, the uniculture is that driven by the language supporters lobby and is their version of what the Welsh culture should be, and it appears to exclude English speakers and definitely English incomers.

It is time you all took a huge dose of reality and started again, Welsh will NEVER replace English as the lingua franca here or anywhere else, English is the most important language our children can learn and use. Welsh is incapable of being established as a language of commerce and

business, forcing it into more and more business areas will drive businesses out of Wales and deter others from coming here.

Welsh should be taught to children who WANT to learn it, but it's use should be recognised as a "social language" between those who can and WANT to use it.

There is no logical justification for using it in business or governance, other than to pander to the shrill demands of activists who are using it as a tool (a wedge) to split us away from the UK by claiming we are different , listen we speak a different language so we should be a different country.

To hold such logical and pragmatic views does not mean one hates the welsh language or people who use it and it is most certainly not unpatriotic, in fact it is the very opposite I and many others wish to see Wales prosper and grow but that is an entirely different debate, for the last 12 yrs the only growth in Wales has been spending on language/culture, whilst everything else goes to pot.

Dave Taylor