

Mentrau

laith

Cymru

PRESS RELEASE

2 April 2014

People Across Wales Declare their Support for the Mentrau laith

During the past month over 1,800 people have pledged their support for the work of the Mentrau laith by signing a petition presented to the Welsh National Assembly Petitions Committee today.

The Mentrau laith are community organisations which operate throughout Wales, providing a wide range of opportunities for children, young people, adults and learners to use the Welsh language.

The petition was presented to the Assembly by the organisation Dyfodol i'r laith in response to the independent report regarding the work of the Mentrau laith published earlier this year. The report found that the important work of the Mentrau should continue and develop but at present the Mentrau are not being funded fairly or adequately in order for them to reach their full potential.

In their response to the report the Mentrau laith have called for an investment of £4.8m which will allow them to work more intensively in their communities, to develop strategic plans to strengthen the Welsh language locally, to develop their staff and to encourage innovation which would help the Mentrau expand their work into new fields.

Meirion Davies, a spokesperson on behalf of the Mentrau, stated "We are very pleased that Dyfodol i'r laith and many individuals across Wales have shown their support via this petition. This gives a clear message to the Welsh Government regarding the level of support people across Wales have for the Mentrau. People want to see the Mentrau strengthen and develop in order to operate more intensely for the benefit of the Welsh language in their communities, and further investment is needed in their work in order for them to do this."

Mr Davies added that the Mentrau are eager to hear more about the Welsh Government's and First Minister's plans to strengthen the Welsh in communities across Wales: "The Government's Welsh Language Strategy *A Living Language: A Language for Living* states that the Welsh Government wish to see the Welsh language flourish, with an increase in the number of Welsh speakers. The work of the Mentrau laith supports this same vision, and following a number of consultations, including 'Y Gynhadledd Fawr' last year, the time has come to take clear and definite steps to strengthen and support the Welsh language in our communities. A positive response by the First Minister to the Mentrau's request for further investment would indeed be a significant step forward which would demonstrate the Welsh Government's and the First Minister's support for the language."

"We fully recognise that we are currently experiencing a challenging economic climate, however we must also recognise that the Welsh language continues to face serious challenges. It lives alongside one of the most dominant languages in the world. If Welsh loses ground as the language of families, communities and young people, the challenge of restoring it to those spheres of life will be very difficult, if not impossible.

“People across Wales have responded positively to the request for further support for our work and it is now time for the Welsh Government to positively respond to the need for further support for the Mentrau and for the Welsh language.

*******ENDS*******

Notes to Editors

A high-resolution jpeg photograph of the petition presentation has been attached. In the photograph, from left to right are:

William Powell AM

Elin Maher, Development Officer, Menter Iaith Casnewydd

Emily Cole, National Co-ordinator, Mentrau Iaith Cymru

Russell George AM

For further information about this press notice please contact Emily Cole 01443 493715
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About the Mentrau iaith

- there are 22 Mentrau iaith (Welsh Language Initiatives) in Wales who operate locally to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language
- The Mentrau employ over 300 members of staff
- 1,300 volunteers
- 13,000 community activities each year
- 160,000 participants each year
- The Mentrau are active in various fields, including economic development, social enterprise, community translation, family services, childcare and play services, youth work, community education, the arts and heritage.