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Summary of the IWA Trustees' Report 2016–17



In a year characterised by dramatic upheaval in politics both local and international – from the 2016 Assembly elections, through the Brexit referendum to the election of President Trump – the IWA has continued to speak truth to power and support the widening and deepening of constructive public commentary on issues of relevance to Wales. Within the organisation we also saw change as Lee Waters stood down as director upon being elected the Assembly Member for Llanelli in May 2016. After Jess Blair stood in as interim director, in November 2016 we welcomed Auriol Miller as our new director.

This summary provides an insight into our activities and growth in the 2016–17 financial year.



About us

Membership

Membership figures continue to increase, leaping by almost 10% during the 2016–17 year. The IWA is now closing in on 1,000 members, and the new Young Professional membership has proved popular. We welcomed several new notable corporate members.

Our membership is the key to our efficacy and the involvement of our members in our work is vital in keeping it relevant and grounded. We will soon begin issuing regular membership surveys to better understand what our members' priorities are.

Reach

The IWA's work was mentioned over 30 times during the 2016–17 year across radio, TV, print and online media including BBC Radio Wales, BBC One, BBC 2 Wales, *The Western Mail* and *South Wales Argus*. Our own platforms provide considerable reach for our policy output as well as a platform for debate and comment; sharing of this material on social networks is increasing, indicating our key role in informing Welsh public discourse. In particular, our Re-energising Wales project achieved prominent coverage through *Click on Wales* articles written by Welsh politicians.

We were sought out as a source of comment and expertise on political events throughout the year, including on Brexit and the National Assembly for Wales elections. Members of our Governance Policy Group gave evidence to the House of Lords EU Select Committee and the Assembly's Constitution and Legislative Affairs Committee.

Finance

We continue to work within a challenging funding environment and are exercising strict control over overhead costs. That said, we brought in year-end results that significantly improved on original budgetary projections and stabilised membership income. We successfully attracted significant grant funding to underpin the Re-energising Wales project and were able to resource a dedicated project coordinator.

Platforms for debate

Events

We ran a successful and busy programme of events and training over the year, moving our policy aims forward and stimulating debate on issues important to Wales. We ran a total of 11 events, attended by over 900 people. Of the events, 2 carried a ticket fee and 9 were free. In addition, we ran 4 training courses on decision-making in Wales and influencing Welsh politics for over 50 people, which received excellent feedback.

Our ongoing series of debates, organised in partnership with Cardiff University, provide an important platform for debating issues central to Welsh life. Last year's topics included the free movement of people and elected mayors and featured speakers such as Professor Roger Scully and Julie Morgan AM.

We continue to focus on ensuring our events are in line with our policy priorities. Over the year we held one economy-focused event on 'Doing Business in Wales', the Media Summit and four governance-focused events, including a hustings in Swansea ahead of the Assembly elections, attended by over 60 people.

Digital platform

Click on Wales, continues to provide timely and insightful commentary from a wide range of writers. Over 200 people wrote for the blog in 2016–17. Over 113,000 people visited our websites during the same period. Readers of *Click* were up 13% year on year and the number of first-time visitors increased by 26%. Considering this alongside our 13,800 Twitter followers, 1,100 Facebook 'likes' and 800 people in our LinkedIn group, it is clear that the IWA's digital footprint is increasingly becoming one of our strongest assets.

Over 5,000 people listened to our 34 podcasts over the year, providing up-to-date discussion on our key policy areas and current affairs. Readership of our highly-regarded in-house magazine, *the welsh agenda*, remains steady at around 2,500.

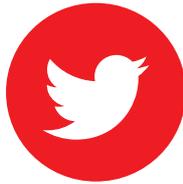
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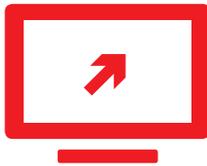
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OVER 200 PEOPLE WROTE FOR THE BLOG



34 PODCASTS, **OVER 5,000** LISTENERS



2,500 READERSHIP OF THE WELSH AGENDA

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Our policy and projects

Economy

In April 2016 we launched our new 3 year flagship project, 'Re-energising Wales', funded by the Jane Hodge Foundation, Friends Provident Foundation and Polden Puckham Charitable Foundation. The project assesses projected energy demands in Wales and how these could be fulfilled from renewable sources by 2035, developing a practical blueprint to make Wales a net exporter of renewable energy whilst at the same time increasing economic and community resilience, widening energy ownership models, and improving energy demand management and efficiency.

Education

The newly reformed Education Policy Group, chaired by Professor Chris Taylor of WISERD, began developing a pipeline of potential projects. We have continued to use our platforms to publish extensive commentary on education in Wales, including discussion of the PISA results, the implementation of the new digital curriculum and gaps in perspectives from policy makers and practitioners. In March 2017, we published *The Single Market of the Mind*, a paper prepared by Geraint Talfan-Davies on the potential impact of Brexit on the funding of Higher Education and culture in Wales.

Governance

The IWA presented extensive independent commentary on the 2016 Welsh Assembly elections and the EU referendum through both *Click on Wales* and our podcasts, offering reactive and insightful analysis with hundreds of listeners per episode. 6 of the 10 most popular articles on *Click on Wales* were related to governance. In October, we canvassed our members as to their opinions on what our priorities should be with regards to Brexit and began using this feedback to guide our work.

We continue to maintain effective relationships at a high level across UK Government and Welsh Government departments, being regularly sought out for informed opinion and comment and we remain committed to playing a constructive role in policy discussions at both ends of the M4 as well as across Wales.

Health & Social Care Following the completion of our very successful flagship project, 'Let's Talk Cancer', in 2015, we have prioritised other policy areas over the past year. We are reviewing our plans in the coming year to ensure a pipeline of potential projects in health and social care.

Media Given our extensive work on media and the recommendations of the IWA Media Audit in 2015, we were delighted to see the National Assembly for Wales establish a Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee, examining media in Wales over the next five years. The IWA's Media Policy Group responded to the draft BBC Charter outlining our concerns. We worked collaboratively to shape the third IWA Cardiff Media Summit to cover key themes and specific issues of relevance and importance to the sector; over 160 people attended the event and themes and issues arising were shared widely.

Priorities for 2017–18

- ▶ We remain focused on being a punchy, forward-thinking, evidence-based and digitally-savvy thinktank, sustainably funded, built on an inclusive and diverse membership, with strong and constructive relationships across the political spectrum within and beyond Wales.
- ▶ We will regularly monitor the range and diversity of voices on *Click on Wales* and expand the editorial board of the welsh agenda to ensure a range of perspectives, voices and opinions from across Wales are represented in our work.
- ▶ We will prioritise fund-seeking for our Media work and developing renewed priorities for our Governance, Economy and Education work, considering how we can best be involved in city region discussions, as well as scoping work on social care. We will encourage greater cross-fertilisation between our Policy Groups to maximise connections between their work.
- ▶ We will seek to learn more about what issues members wish to engage on and why by running a regular member engagement questionnaire and using feedback more systematically to shape our work. In addition, we will seek to use new technologies to engage people from different regions in Wales.



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