

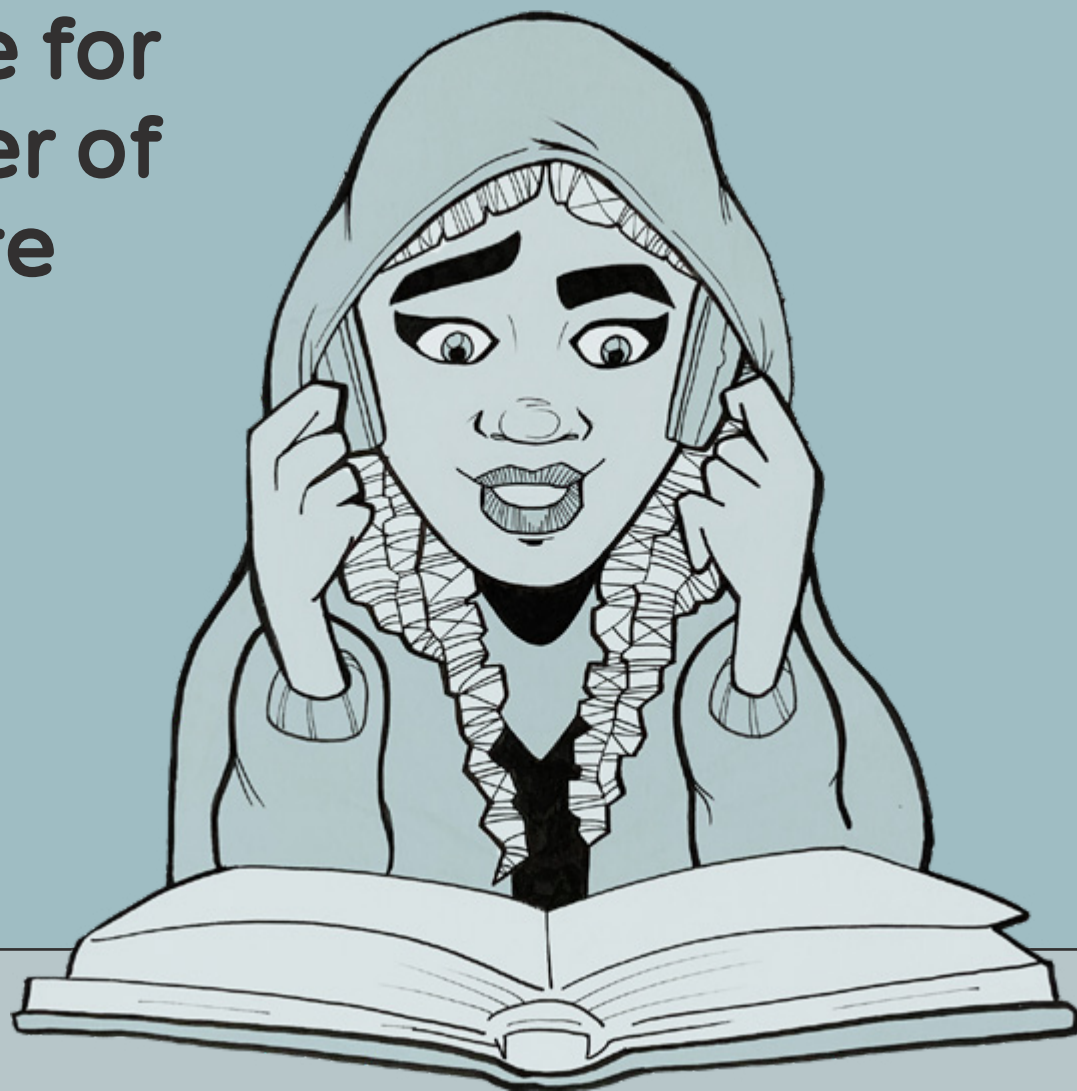
Literature Wales

The Case for the Power of Literature

Inspiring
communities

Developing
writers

Celebrating Wales'
literary culture



Llenyddiaeth
Cymru
Literature
Wales

2019-2022
Mid-Term Report

Making Hope Possible – the Case for the Power of Literature

Mid-term Report on our Strategic Plan 2019-2022

We empower, improve and brighten lives through literature. Our projects are designed to make a difference and through words we help shape our society, economy and culture in Wales.

2020 has been a year of challenge and change. From the books, comics and screen adaptations we've absorbed during lockdown, to the use of creative writing to help us cope with increased anxieties around social isolation, it has never been more important for us to support, share and use literature to improve lives and make hope possible where we can.

Literature Wales has faced up to those new challenges and transformed the way we work, focusing on how literature can enhance the lives of every one of us in the modern, vibrant Wales we are all a part of. Our literary culture makes a huge contribution to our well-being, giving voice to the unheard and inspiring both personal reflection and national debate.

But literature isn't only a personal journey – as well as bringing communities together, it drives our creative economy. Writers are central to many creative forms including film, gaming and publishing, and they use these forms to shine a light into our world. Wales' literary culture offers us a unique and powerful economic opportunity, and as a National Company we play a key role in the creative and professional development of our writers.

We've forged new partnerships to help us reach across every corner of our nation and beyond, bringing new opportunities to grow as people, as writers and as a society built on a unique literary culture and heritage. Working with a range of organisations, from the Football Association of Wales, Disability Arts Cymru, the Books Council of Wales, British Council, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, Scottish Poetry Library, the National Companies of Wales and many others, we've nurtured our culture at home and shared our voice with the world.

This organisational update showcases our progress at the mid-point of our 2019-2022 Strategic Plan. We share how in 2020, despite the difficult conditions, Literature Wales has helped inspire future generations, develop more diverse literary voices and created cultural and economic capital for us all.

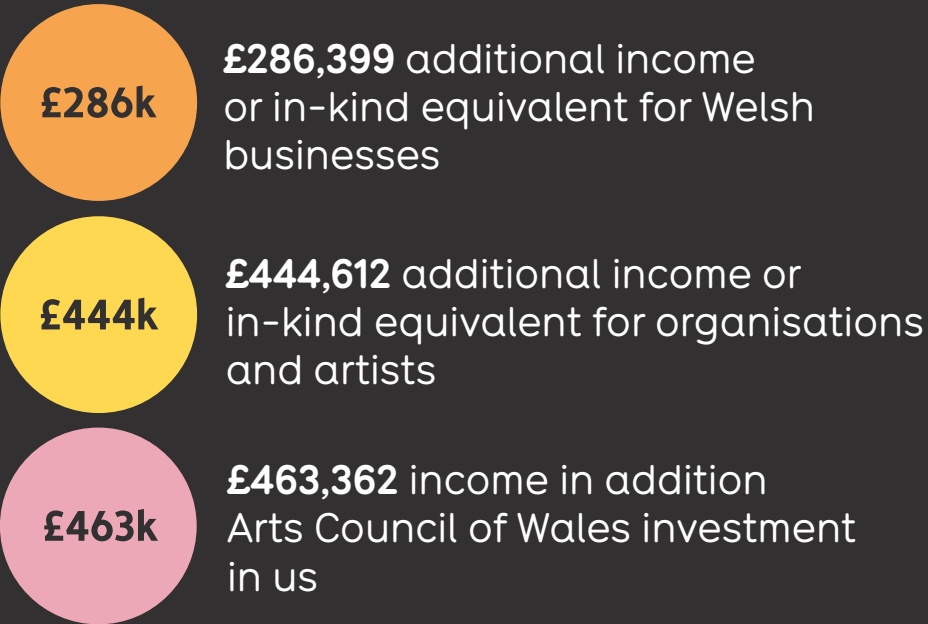
Dr Kate North **Lleucu Siencyn**
Chair, Literature Wales CEO, Literature Wales

"We're seeing the development of a vibrant and engaged literary scene in Wales. Both the emerging and established writers are exploring imaginatively an important mix of subjects and ideas, sifting the preoccupations and challenges of our times."

Phil George
Chair, Arts Council of Wales

Our year in numbers

During 2019/2020, Literature Wales generated:



This equates to **£1.194m***

For every £1 invested in Literature Wales, an extra £1.61 is generated for the economy.

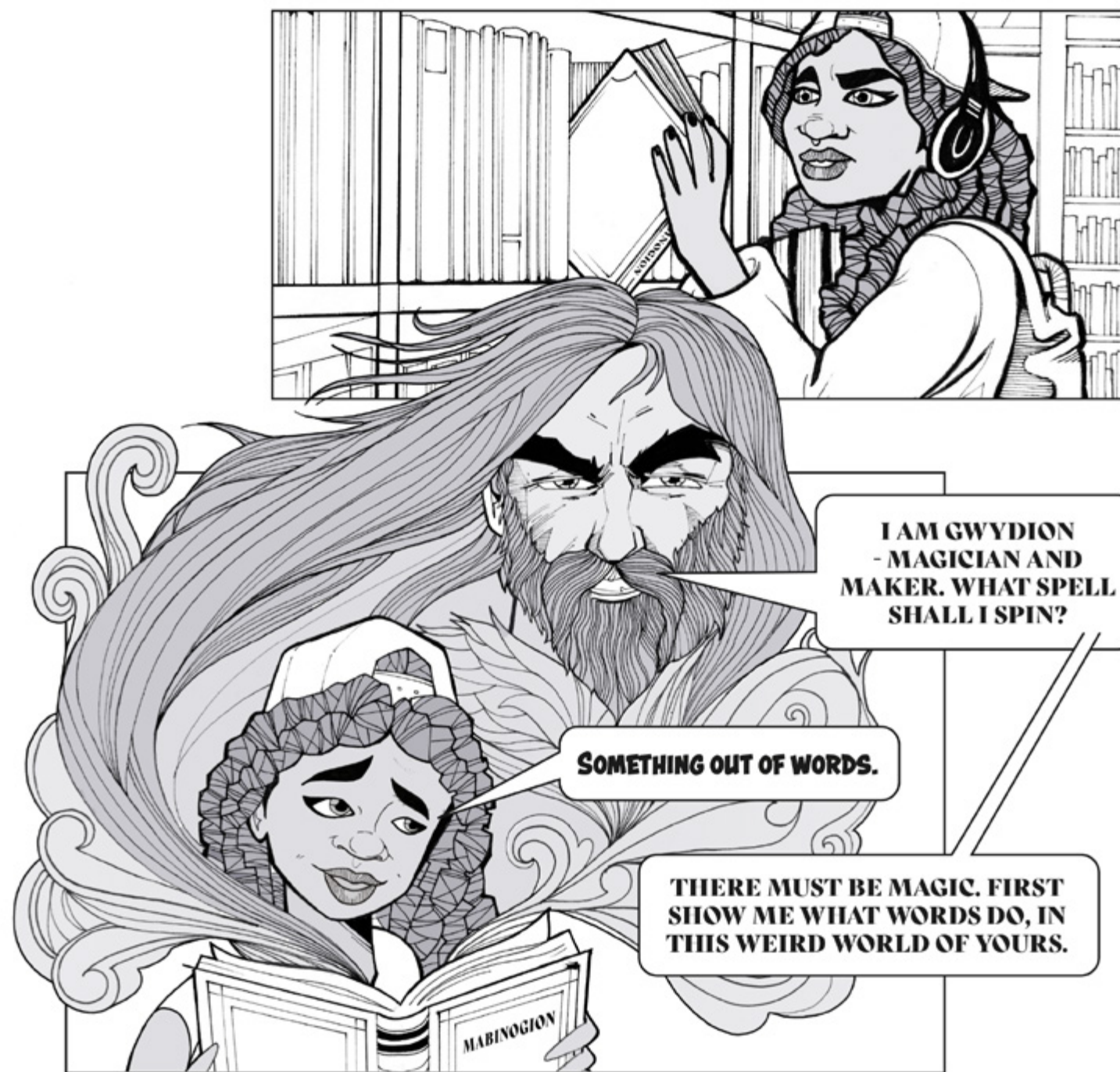
*Figures for period 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020



“Wales is the only nation I know of which, to its enormous credit, celebrates literature and music in its national anthem. ‘Gwlad beirdd a chantorion’ is a proud claim, and deservedly so.

The work described in this report is a tribute both to the magnificent heritage of centuries of engagement with language and literature and thought, and to the dedicated work of those determined to preserve, to celebrate, and very importantly to advance and develop the art of literature with a young and diverse generation of poets and writers.”

Philip Pullman
Patron of Literature Wales



Participation

Inspiring our communities and future generations

Creative writing is an important tool for personal reflection, giving children and adults alike an outlet for their thoughts, empowering them to find their voice and make real changes to their lives and to our society. In such uncertain times, with loneliness and isolation an ever-present threat to our mental health, it has never been more important to use that power to support the wellbeing of our citizens and our communities.

Our Strategy

We increase the accessibility and impact of creative writing for participants in Wales because this:

- Improves well-being and helps decrease isolation
- Engages under-represented individuals and communities
- Creates opportunities for participants to develop their literary talents

We have inspired some of our most marginalised individuals and communities through active participation in literature.

2019/2020 Highlights

We announced Eloise Williams as the first ever **Children's Laureate Wales**, with digital weekly writing challenges for children taking place as the COVID-19 lockdown began.

The second round of our **Literature for Well-being** funding scheme was launched, with writer-led participation projects reaching some of Wales' most marginalised people, including prisoners and refugees.

Our partnership with the **Football Association of Wales** led to a film poem created by Newport school children, and a collaboration on the Cymru Euro 2020 Poetry Competition.

Though our partnerships and participation we reached more than **80,000** people this year, including almost **10,000** children and young people. Our activities help tackle social challenges, and particularly addresses issues relating to health and well-being.

2019/2020 Key Figures

82,435 people participated in a Literature Wales activity

9,688 children and young people engaged with our work

518 participants were directed to our writer development opportunities

194 of our participatory sessions were aimed at children and young people

11.5% of adults in Wales participated in creative writing activities

"This writing workshop was a unique way to express how we as young people view our struggles and the struggles of others with their mental health. From start to finish we could be ourselves and we are grateful to have been given the chance and a voice."

A Young Person
Be Brave Creative Writing Workshop with Newport Mind



Writer Development

Developing the creative and professional potential of our writers

From poetry, fiction and print publications to scriptwriting, new media and the graphic novel, we've reached out across all forms. We are committed to addressing unequal access to professional literary careers at all levels and our work includes bespoke programmes of support and guidance.

A strong literary culture is built on confident creative voices. Our writer development work reaches out to support and encourage new and diverse talent, giving the next generation of writers the skills to contribute to Wales' creative industries. We've worked closely with partners in Wales and beyond to ensure that new talent has the opportunity to grow, to learn and to develop.

Our Strategy

We help Wales' writers to hone and diversify their skills because this:

- Delivers new opportunities for early career writers
- Provides writers with a range of skills to work in other sectors
- Significantly develops the literary potential and skills of young writers

This develops the creative and professional potential of new and emerging writers and helps diversify Wales' creative industries.

2019/2020 Highlights

We launched **Rising Stars Wales** in partnership with independent publisher Firefly Press to identify talented children's poets from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.

Writers' Bursaries and Mentoring Scheme received a record 186 applications.

Nant Writers' Retreat cottage was refurbished and opened reaching full capacity in first season.

We offered a range of residencies at **Tŷ Newydd Writing Centre** including with the literary collectives Y Stamp and Where I'm Coming From, and a Welsh-language Writing for Young Adults course in partnership with the Books Council of Wales.

We launched a new **Professional Development Programme for Writers of Colour** to help writers of colour reach their long-term writing and career ambitions.

2019/2020 Key Figures

31,562 people viewed our online writer development materials

2,495 people took part in our professional training sessions

293 creative and professional opportunities were offered to early career writers

140 young writers gained sustained support

47 professional training courses were delivered by more than **60** writers

"I am deeply grateful accepting this award. It has already opened up a terrific opportunity for me as the wonderful people at Firefly Press will be publishing my full collection of poems *Daydreams* and *Jellybeans* early next year. Poems are to be shared; they find the people who need them – and the award has enabled a wider platform for my words."

Alex Wharton
Rising Star Wales Award 2020



Celebrating Our Literary Culture

Celebrating our contemporary writers and diverse literary heritage

Wales' culture is a huge economic and social asset, and one that allows us to take Wales to the world. According to data from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Visit Britain, culture and heritage attractions in Wales draw 10 million visitors each year and contribute over £1 billion of Gross Value Added to the economy.

We celebrate Wales' rich literary culture and to create new ones for future generations. We've established new international partnerships to showcase Wales' voice in both Welsh and English and are exploiting the power of digital channels to engage with an even wider range of writers and reach new audiences.

Our Strategy

We strengthen the range, reach and reputation of Wales' writers because this:

- Supports national and international projects which celebrate the distinctiveness of Wales' languages, literatures, and cultures
- Creates new literary commissions from organisations working outside the literature sector
- Widens opportunities and recognition for individuals from under-represented groups

This celebrates the best of our contemporary writers and takes our diverse literary heritage to the world.

2019/2020 Highlights

We celebrated the 2019 **UNESCO Year of Indigenous Languages** and enabled collaboration between Wales, Scotland and Ireland, showcasing our living languages to a global audience.

Our **National Poet of Wales** Ifor ap Glyn represented our nation around the world, including in Lithuania, China, Cameroon, Germany and Belgium.

The **Wales Book of the Year Award** ceremony took place in Aberystwyth, with Ailbhe Darcy and Manon Steffan Ros winning the overall prizes.

World Book Day celebrations were held across Wales with **Children's Laureate Wales** and **Bardd Plant Cymru** delivering creative workshops to hundreds of schoolchildren.

We continued to promote and develop the **Land of Legends** website with partner Visit Wales, sharing our cultural heritage with the world.

2019/2020 Key Figures

45,000 annual visits to our Land of Legends website, from more than **100** countries

250 established writers and **244** literary works engaged in high-profile projects

54 early career writers were showcased

43 commissions were awarded to writers through our intervention

21 international partnership and exchange projects were supported

"We are a country where words and lyricism go hand-in-hand and the role of National Poet of Wales is testament to the importance we place on language. Whether on the page or the stage, Ifor ap Glyn's role has been to thrill and inspire us but also to respond to and reflect the world around us, helping us to make sense of it."

Mark Drakeford
First Minister of Wales



Our ambitions

A Wales where literature empowers, improves and brightens our lives

Literature is far more than literacy. Our stories and poetry help us to explore our society, connect to each other and make sense of our world.

Our ambitions are focused on increasing the well-being of our citizens through engagement with words and stories, nurturing the voices of the future through professional development and securing and celebrating the legacy of our past and contemporary writers.

Our spiritual home, **Tŷ Newydd Writing Centre**, is where we create the future. This former home of David Lloyd George is a Welsh cultural icon, but it doesn't look

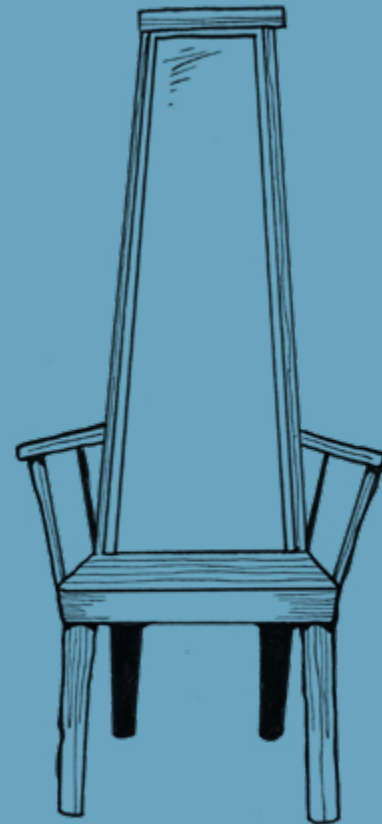
to the past. This is the place where the next generation of Welsh voices come to hone their skills – it offers a motivational environment to support the creative process.

Each year more than **400** people take part in our training and writer development programme at Tŷ Newydd, and the centre brings early career and established writers from around the world to Llanystumdwy. Our national writing centre takes Wales to the world and the world to Wales.

Tŷ Newydd is where we reflect on our history to create our future.

“Tŷ Newydd is Wales' best kept secret. The house has loads of character and is labyrinthine – so many nooks and crannies and the best library ever. You instantly feel at home. The food is homecooked and wonderful and the staff welcoming. If you seek inspiration you will find it here: in the workshops at Tŷ Newydd; on the bardic chair in the garden; all along the wild coastline.”

Patience Agbabi
Writer



The Future

Learning, reflecting and embracing change

Literature is one of our oldest artforms, but it continues to inspire and create a multitude of forms and universes.

We know that the work we do at Literature Wales – co-created and delivered in partnership with writers and communities – helps to make Wales and the world a better place.

Taking part in literature and being creative is the right of every child in Wales. The next generation will shape our future for the better and we give them the tools and power to do so.

We all have stories to tell, and we have the basic human need to listen and learn from each other. We need to be kinder and have more empathy for individuals and communities around us. Literature helps us to do this. We can't imagine our world without it.

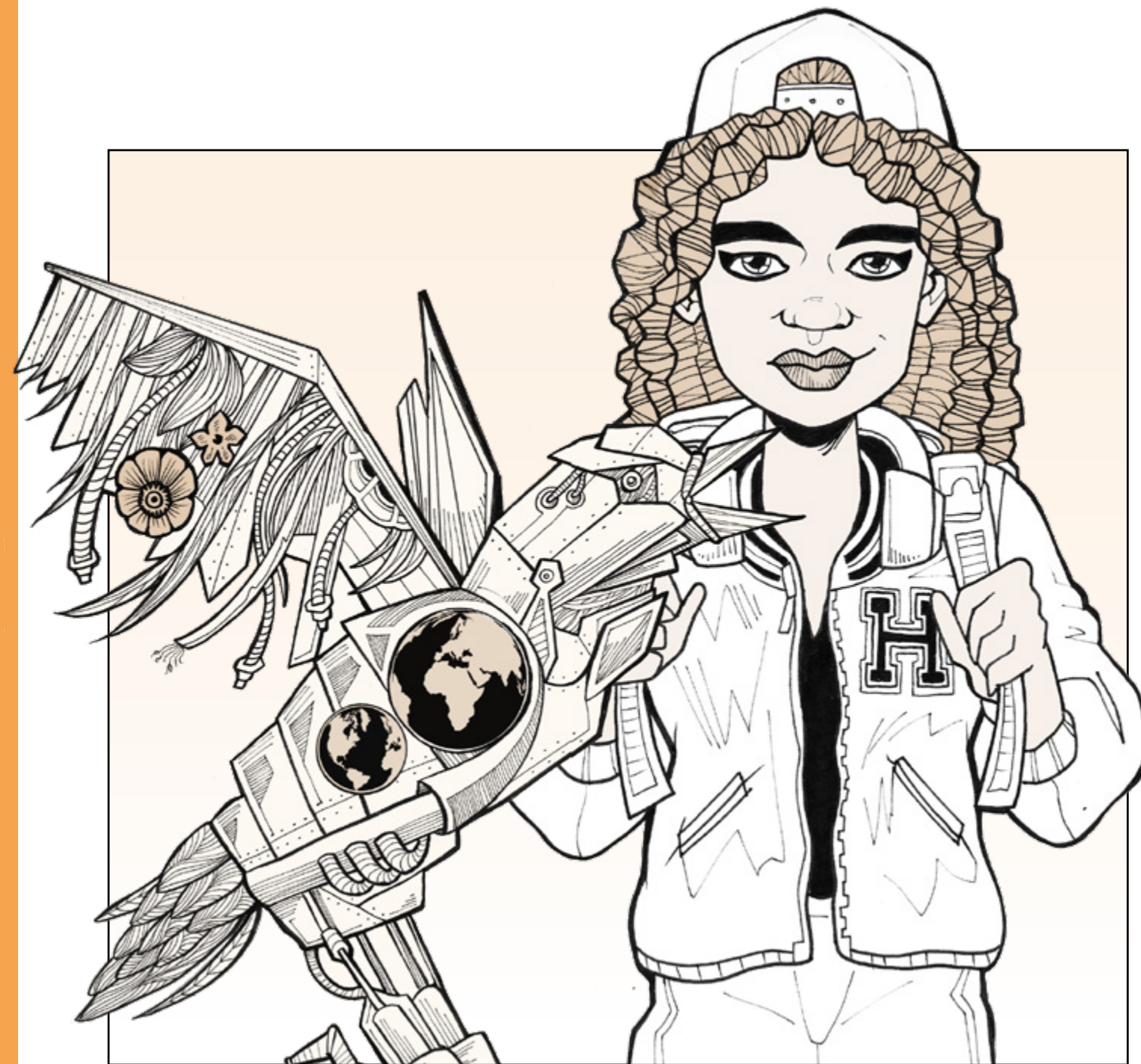
“‘Making hope possible’. These are the words that open this mid-term report; three words taken from a quotation that talks about the need to be ‘truly radical’. They belong to Raymond Williams whose centenary will be commemorated in 2021. It is fitting therefore that as writers and readers of Wales and the world this document encourages us to stop and reflect on the roots of our past as we look to the future. We need to be equipped so that we can nurture the branches that bring forth hope; a hope that can turn this old world into a new and better garden.”

Professor Mererid Hopwood
Poet, Author and Academic

Our Pledge

As the national company for the development of literature in Wales, we will continue to:

- Use **participation** in literature as a tool to improve the **health & well-being** of our current and future generations
- Focus, fund and foster **writer development** opportunities for writers at all stages of their careers
- Celebrate the past, present and future legacies of the writers of Wales and their literary works
- Prioritise initiatives which tackle **under-representation** and **inequality** in the sector
- Encourage **children and young people** to experiment with literature as a way to encourage reading and writing for pleasure.



Acknowledgements

Our Directors

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Elizabeth George (Deputy Chair)
Annie Finlayson
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Lleucu Siencyn

Patron

Philip Pullman

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