

Cymraeg yn y Gweithle: Telynau Teifi

Telynau Teifi was set up in 2003 as a Community Enterprise business to make lever harps, which basically means that it isn't quite a charity, but it is not for profit business (any profits that are made have to be re-invested in the business rather than going to shareholders etc).

There is also a responsibility to have strong links with the local community – providing locals with jobs, having visits from groups in the area and using the Harp centre for teaching. Llandysul has a very strong community of Welsh speakers, with the local school teaching mainly through the medium of Welsh; so when I took over Managing Telynau Teifi, I felt that it was hugely important to have more access to Welsh in the business. When I started here in 2017 the only Welsh speaker associated with TT was Owen Shiers; but he only visits the premises from time to time, most of his work on the website is done remotely, so there was nobody available to speak to customers or visitors in Welsh at all.

What service/s did your Welsh language in Business Development Officer provide for your organisation?

The Development Officer has been brilliant at helping us on the road to having Welsh play a bigger part in our business. She has let us know about various events so that we could be involved ie a business fair in Cardigan castle and Welsh Music day in February; she has given us various materials in Welsh for the office, like 'open' and 'shut' signs in Welsh, but the biggest contribution has been translating our website for us which was a huge task and something that as a small business we couldn't have afforded to have done without her help.



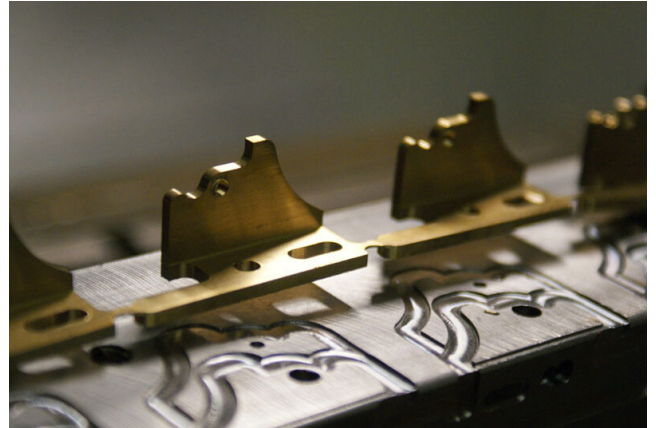
What's your background, and what were your feelings about trying to use the language in your business before working with your local officer?

When I started working at Teifi Harps I was surprised that nobody spoke Welsh in the business. I started learning Welsh a few years ago because I felt that it was a really important part of being included and fully part of the local community. My children have all been part of the Welsh education system, being taught through Welsh, and I wanted to be able to help them; and as a trained Primary school teacher, I wanted to be able to teach in local schools too (which I went on to do). There have been many other things that have had to be prioritised in TT since I took over, but language has been one of those priorities for me from the start. I try to talk to customers in Welsh if they start a conversation in Welsh; but I have to say, after a gap of not having anyone to chat with in Welsh on a regular basis, my confidence in speaking has gone down rapidly – especially on the phone where you don't get any of the visual clues as well. Having Pat come in has given me the help I needed to really get the ball rolling and make Welsh a priority and tackle bigger projects like the website.



Was increasing the use of the Welsh language in your business something you'd thought about before?

I was surprised that TT didn't use more Welsh when I started working here – especially with the logo saying 'Telynau Teifi Harps'. From first working here I have tried to use Welsh where possible



What was your experience of the service?

The service has been brilliant. As I said before; we wouldn't have been able to get the website translated without the help we have had from the project. We are in the process of getting our postcards and pricelists reprinted in Welsh to give to our Welsh customers, our Welsh version of our website will be launched very soon. I attended the 'Welsh in the workplace' business fair at Cardigan castle and found it really useful – not just because of the content of the talk on using social media within your business, but also it was a chance to be completely immersed in Welsh for a few hours and I was really pleased to find that I could still understand everything without any need for a translator – a real confidence boost!

Have you had a positive response to using the Welsh language where you can in your organisation?

I think that using Welsh in the workplace – or indeed anywhere, is usually met with a warm response, even if mistakes are made. The interesting thing for me, is that the appeal of using Welsh and having written Welsh in promotional material, is not just appealing to Welsh speakers – people living outside of Wales (especially those from overseas) like the fact that the company is Welsh with a strong cultural identity that is reflected by the inclusion of the Welsh language in its day to day running and promotional material.



Future Plans

We will soon have our bi-lingual website up and running and our other promotional material will now be available in Welsh too. Next I would like to have a huge display painted on the wall in our harp studio with Welsh words associated with the business and how to say them in brackets along with the English e.g. Telyn (say 'tell-in ') – a harp. I think this could be really eye-catching, and a fun way to help people 'have a go' at the language. I would like to try and find the time to go back to studying Welsh myself; but I think that will have to wait a while, as I am already trying to learn how to play the harp in my 'spare' time.