



Y Fro Gymraeg

What the Fro Gymraeg is, why we need it, and how we can win it

IE DROS Y FRO!

YES TO THE FRO!



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Foreword

This booklet presents a definition of the Fro Gymraeg, Cymuned's Declaration on behalf of the Fro Gymraeg, a map of the Fro, and a collection of outline policy suggestions for the Fro.

Cymuned is calling for the official recognition of the existence of the Fro Gymraeg as a crucial step towards making sure that the current dramatic decline in the number of Cymraeg-speaking communities can be halted.

One of the most influential figures in the field of international linguistic planning, Professor Joshua A. Fishman, has emphasised the central importance of linguistic communities to the future of minority languages. Without communities where the minority language is the natural language of society, there is not a sustainable future for the minority language.

In a world where the vast majority of those who work on behalf of minority languages have no choice but to concentrate on the enormously difficult task of developing communities, we are extremely fortunate in Cymru that we still have natural Cymraeg-speaking communities. That which is for many an almost impossible dream is already here in our hands.

But there is a very real danger that we are wasting this significant advantage. Our Cymraeg-speaking communities are diminishing at an alarming rate, principally due to inward and outward migration, house prices, a lack of quality employment and a lack of status for the language.

It is not possible to solve the problems of the Fro Gymraeg without first recognising and celebrating its existence. That is precisely what Cymuned are calling for by publishing this booklet. It is vital that the Assembly Government recognise, and celebrate, the existence of the Fro Gymraeg as a first step towards the work of solving the problems that it faces.

This booklet also contains a collection of outline policy suggestions for the Fro Gymraeg. You will probably agree with some, and perhaps disagree with others, but they all show how much easier it would be to create practical and effective policies once the Fro Gymraeg is recognised as a geographical entity. You do not have to agree in detail with every policy suggestion to support the call for official recognition of the Fro Gymraeg.

We do not have a lot of time left. In the last census, there were only 12 communities left in Cymru where over 80% of the population spoke Cymraeg. If we are to have any chance of keeping those communities alive, we need official recognition of the existence of the Fro Gymraeg.

Aran Jones
Prif Weithredwr Cymuned
October 2005

DECLARATION OF THE FRO GYMRAEG

proclaimed on the 23rd October 2004

Preamble

Whereas every human being is of equal worth and value;

Whereas there is within the human race a great and rich variety of language, culture and nationality; and all languages, cultures and nationalities in the world are of equal worth and value;

Whereas every nation, whether large or small, has the right to exist in its own proper communities and territory, without having to suffer colonisation; and no nation has the right to colonise the communities and land of another nation;

Whereas racism (namely oppression on grounds of race, that is physical characteristics, rather than or in addition to nationality, language or culture) is utterly repugnant;

Whereas colonisation (which happens when migrants refuse to integrate into a new country, but instead impose their own language, culture and identity on the country to which they migrate, assimilating and/or displacing the indigenous people) is a form of theft and therefore a crime, and is a form of racism (namely colonial racism) since colonisation and racism are inextricably linked, both historically and at the present time;

Whereas many of the world's indigenous languages, cultures and nations are in danger of extinction ('ethnocide') and others are already extinct, mainly as a result of colonisation and colonial racism;

Whereas this process is a threat to the common heritage of the whole of humanity as well as that of individual nations, and is therefore a crime against humanity;

Whereas Cymraeg (the Welsh language) and its parent Brythoneg have been the indigenous languages of Cymru (Wales) for around 2,500 years, but it is now only in Y Fro Gymraeg that Cymraeg is a community language;

Whereas Y Fro Gymraeg, its communities, its language and its culture now face extermination and ethnocide due to colonisation and the loss of much of its indigenous population, in common with many of the world's other indigenous peoples;

Whereas the declarations of the United Nations and the Council of Europe recognise the right of indigenous peoples not to suffer ethnocide, to retain their traditional lands and their identity, and to be protected by their governments; and that these rights are an integral part of the international framework for safeguarding human rights;

Now, therefore,

We solemnly proclaim the following declaration:

Article 1 - Y Fro Gymraeg exists as a distinct region and areas of Cymru, namely those parts of the traditional territory of the Cymry (Welsh people) where the majority of the indigenous population and a third or more of the total population are able to speak and understand Cymraeg.

Article 2 - We fully support all efforts to restore and popularise Cymraeg in other parts of Cymru (and we also support the Welsh culture of those regions which is expressed through the medium of English or other languages), but we believe that the survival of Y Fro Gymraeg is indispensable to the survival and development of Cymraeg in the rest of Cymru and as a national language, and to the survival of Cymru as a nation.

Article 3 - The people of Y Fro Gymraeg have the right to retain it as a region and areas whose particular and proper language is Cymraeg, where Cymraeg will be the official language, the natural language of the community, the main language of administration and commerce and all other aspects of life, and the common language amongst in-migrants and between in-migrants and indigenous people; and they have the right not to suffer colonisation and loss of the indigenous population.

Article 4 - The people of Y Fro Gymraeg (including those indigenous people who are not able to speak or understand Cymraeg) have the right to social justice, which includes homes, work and livelihoods, together with education and other services provided through the medium of Cymraeg, within communities whose language is Cymraeg.

Article 5 - 'Normal in-migration' (which happens when migrants of any origin, extraction or race respect the language, culture and identity of Y Fro Gymraeg, learn and use Cymraeg and integrate into the community on that basis) is fully acceptable in Y Fro Gymraeg, and can further enrich our multi-racial and inclusive Cymraeg-speaking society.

Article 6 - No-one has the right to colonise Y Fro Gymraeg, whether intentionally or otherwise; such colonisation is a colonial-racist act and therefore a crime, as are encouragement and support for colonisation; and denying, opposing or undermining the existence of Y Fro Gymraeg and its communities are also colonial-racist acts.

Article 7 - The people of Y Fro Gymraeg have the moral right to oppose colonisation and the loss of its indigenous population, and to oppose policies and actions which further these processes. Such opposition is in solidarity with other indigenous peoples throughout the world who are suffering as a result of colonial racism. This is not a conflict between nations, but rather between two ideologies, namely colonial racism on the one hand and anti-colonialism/anti-racism on the other..

Article 8 - We oppose totally all forms of racism; we declare that all human beings are of equal worth and value, whatever their race and physical characteristics; and we declare that Y Fro Gymraeg is a multi-racial and inclusive region and areas whose particular and proper language is Cymraeg.

Article 9 - We declare that it is the responsibility of everyone in Cymru to do that which is within their power to ensure the survival of Y Fro Gymraeg and its communities..

Article 10 - We demand that the Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru (the Welsh National Assembly Government), the United Kingdom Government, the European Union and all other relevant bodies support this declaration, recognise the existence of Y Fro Gymraeg and its right to continue to exist, accept their moral responsibility to protect it, and take such action as is necessary to fulfil that responsibility.

Why the Fro Gymraeg?

Cymuned is campaigning for the establishment of a Bro Gymraeg which has been geographically defined. But what exactly does this entail?

Simply enough, it means that Cymuned recognises the linguistic reality of Cymru, which is that there are some communities where almost all the local people speak Cymraeg, and others where the significant majority do not speak the language. Cymuned is fully supportive of the improvements in terms of number of speakers in areas which are principally non-Cymraeg speaking. However, we believe that it is vital to recognise the special linguistic needs of communities where Cymraeg is the language of the majority.

Unfortunately, problems cannot be solved until their existence is recognised. Cymuned believes that official recognition of the existence of the Fro Gymraeg is vital if we are to have any success dealing with the problems that the language faces in these areas.

In one sense, this is already happening in Cymru. In the sphere of education, for example, Ysgolion Naturiol Cymraeg and Ysgolion Categori A in Cymraeg-speaking communities recognise the de facto existence of these communities.

But we have to go further than the school yard alone if we are to keep Cymraeg the language of the community. By defining Cymraeg-speaking communities, we can develop specific policies on their behalf in fields as diverse as housing, employment and civil rights.

Although this would be a new development in Cymru, the idea of varying community and linguistic policies in order to reflect accurately the linguistic reality of different communities has been actively practised for years in other parts of Europe. Perhaps the most familiar example to us in Cymru is the *Gaeltacht* in Ireland – but Irish-speaking communities were already extremely weak and scattered when the *Gaeltachtaí* were established in the 1920s.

Perhaps a better example is that of the Basque Country. In communities where over 70% of the population speak Basque, the language policies are more radical than they are in other parts of the country. Road signs are provided in Basque only, and Basque is the sole medium of communication in council meetings and community activities. These defined Basque-speaking communities include a number of towns as well as

more rural areas. Nobody in Basque Country suggests that the existence of these Basque-speaking communities 'divides the country' or 'weakens the language in other areas'.

Cymuned believes that it is possible to identify and support majority Cymraeg-speaking communities while at the same time promoting Cymraeg as a language for the whole of Cymru.

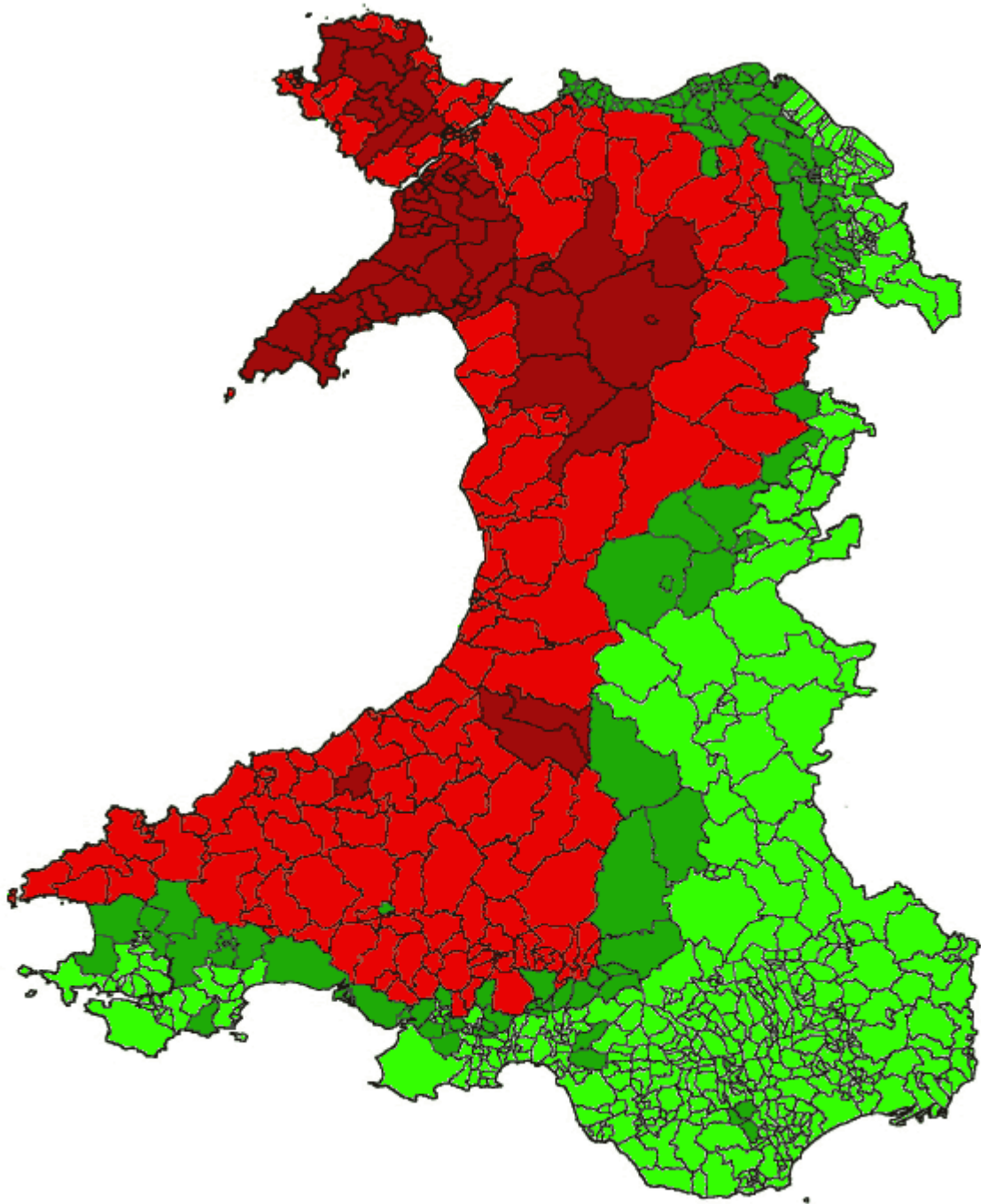
The truth is that if we do not define Cymraeg-speaking communities geographically, there will very soon be none left to define. Although official status, the education system, the media and support from the State are all exceptionally important, the single most significant factor in supporting a minority language is the existence of geographical communities where the minority language is spoken as the natural language of every-day life.

And it's not just Cymuned who say this! The leading authority in the world on minority languages, Professor Joshua A. Fishman, states that the most important factor for a minority language is to maintain communities where the language is the natural medium both of the family and of the society.

It is for sake of these communities that Cymuned campaigns.

Seimon Brooks
October 2005

Map of the Fro Gymraeg



The Fro Gymraeg is the red areas on the map, where over 50% of Welsh people speak Cymraeg. In the dark red areas, over 90% of Welsh people speak Cymraeg.

The green areas are outside the Fro Gymraeg and require different policies. Having said that, we consider the dark green areas, where over a third of Welsh people can speak Welsh, to be areas that could reasonably be considered potential *bröydd* Cymraeg. These areas should be targeted with projects to increase the community usage of Welsh with the aim, in due course, of including them in the Fro Gymraeg if a majority of their inhabitants so wish.

Outline policies for the Fro Gymraeg

An elected Statutory Council should be established to represent the interests of the Fro Gymraeg

Cymuned believes that Cymru is a nation, and considers that Cymraeg is a language relevant to the whole of Cymru. We also believe that the Fro Gymraeg forms a cultural region within Cymru. We believe that any model that is used to regionalise Cymru should acknowledge this linguistic fact.

An elected statutory council to represent the Fro Gymraeg could follow international models such as *Udaras na Gaeltachta*, the elected council of the Irish-speaking communities of Ireland, mainly responsible for economic development, or *Comisiun na Gaeltachta*, the body that advises the Government in Dublin on Irish-speaking communities, or *Udalerri Euskaldunen Mankomunitatea*, the Basque country umbrella organisation for community councils where over the 70% of the population speak Basque.

The new Statutory Council could be responsible for the linguistic environment in exactly the same way as the three National Park Authorities in Cymru are responsible for the visual environment. The Statutory Council should be able to set targets for minimum language performance levels for county councils that have within them Cymraeg-speaking communities. The Council should also be responsible for secondary legislation in planning.

An Economic Development Authority should be established specifically for the Fro Gymraeg

The Authority should be based either on a Welsh model, such as the disbanded Development Board for Rural Wales, or on a European model such as *Udaras na Gaeltachta* in Ireland. The Authority would be responsible for establishing and developing indigenous companies, attracting appropriate inward investment, and ensuring that economic development does not militate against the interest of the language.

A Regional Committee for the Fro Gymraeg should be established within the Assembly

The present Welsh administrative regions – such as ‘North Wales’ and ‘Mid and West Wales’ – divide the Cymraeg-speaking communities rather than unite them. Furthermore, local government boundaries do not necessarily follow language boundaries. Many Cymraeg-speaking communities are located within the borders of local authorities that are not predominantly Cymraeg-speaking, and who may not be prepared, perhaps, to implement strong language policies.

As the Cymraeg-speaking communities are similar in terms of their socio-linguistic and economic profile, we believe that co-operation between Cymraeg-speaking communities should be encouraged across these administrative boundaries. This is why we believe that a Regional Committee for the Fro Gymraeg is needed in the Assembly.

Cymraeg should be made the internal language of local authorities within the Fro Gymraeg

A system of this kind should be established immediately in the county councils of Ynys Môn, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire, following Gwynedd Council's successful example. To facilitate this, local authorities in the Fro Gymraeg, together with public bodies that are accountable to the National Assembly, should receive additional funding to enable them to release non-Cymraeg-speaking staff to attend intensive courses in Cymraeg.

A knowledge of Cymraeg should be a statutory obligation for those individuals who provide a public service in the Fro Gymraeg

In many villages, the local post office provides these services. Those who work in post offices in the Fro Gymraeg should be able to speak Cymraeg. The National Assembly should establish a Community Fund for rural communities who wish to form co-operative companies to safeguard specific services in their locality, such as the village shop, the pub and so forth.

Citizenship lessons in the culture, history and language of Cymru should be provided for newcomers to the Fro Gymraeg

Cymuned believes that newcomers in the Fro Gymraeg have a civic responsibility to learn Cymraeg. We also believe that there is a community responsibility on the Fro Gymraeg; the responsibility to facilitate the task of teaching Cymraeg to newcomers, making it as attractive, effective and convenient as possible. To enable the Fro Gymraeg to achieve this, the Assembly will have to make a significant financial investment.

The education system in the Fro Gymraeg should normalise Cymraeg as the medium of instruction for all pupils between 3 and 16 years old

Cymuned believes that statutory education through the medium of Cymraeg is essential if we are to buttress the community's ability to ensure successful language transmission from generation to generation. We believe that all children in Cymru should have the opportunity to become confidently bilingual at 16 years old. In the Fro Gymraeg, a failure to provide this opportunity would be equivalent to denying the rights of children to play a full part in their community.

A federal Cymraeg-medium University should be established, and Cymraeg-medium vocational education improved

We believe that this will make more Cymraeg-speakers qualified for a wider range of professional jobs in the Fro Gymraeg than is currently the case. Establishing a federal Cymraeg-medium University would complete the Cymraeg-medium educational establishment from nursery to tertiary education, and it would lead to a rise in the Cymraeg-medium provision in secondary schools, tertiary colleges and further education colleges. It would also lead to a rise in the number of students who would take advantage of that provision.

Some towns in the Fro Gymraeg should be developed as centres that would appeal to young people of an urban inclination

These ‘trefi twf’ (growth towns) should be developed economically, by moving the headquarters of Cymraeg-medium institutions and movements there, by establishing low rent business parks, by adopting a specific policy of developing a Cymraeg-medium youth culture, and by supporting cultural community initiatives such as Y Sesiwn Fawr in Dolgellau. It should be possible to enjoy a ‘cosmopolitan’ lifestyle in the Fro Gymraeg through the medium of Cymraeg. Agencies and public bodies that receive funding from the Assembly and are dependent on Cymraeg for their existence should be required to relocate to the Fro Gymraeg and these ‘trefi twf’.

The Assembly should aim to extend the Fro Gymraeg by helping more wards become a part of it

A dedicated fund should be established in order to support wards outside of the Fro Gymraeg that declare through majority vote the desire to become part of the Fro Gymraeg, to help them reach the necessary percentage of Cymraeg-speakers through strengthening the local Cymraeg-medium educational system and through supporting Cymraeg-medium community ventures.

How to Help

If you would like to help in the work of calling for official recognition of the Fro Gymraeg, there are a number of different ways for you to make a real difference without taking up too much of your time.

Firstly, you can sign the petition over the page, and ask your family and friends to sign it also, before returning it to Cymuned's office (our address is at the bottom of the petition). This will help us put pressure on the Assembly to discuss what we are suggesting.

If you'd like to go a step further than that, **get in touch with the office to ask for our 'YnyFro.com' stickers**, which promote a website that presents our arguments for recognition of the Fro Gymraeg. Even putting just a few stickers up in safe and legal places draws more attention to what we are calling for, and makes a very real difference – to date, approximately 4% of visitors to the website become members of Cymuned.

And that, of course, is the next step for you, as well. You can **become a member of Cymuned** for as little as £2 a month by filling in the membership form in the back of this booklet. Every contact member (those who pay monthly) receives Cymuned's monthly newsletter, and helps us work towards being able to employ another member of staff. By increasing our resources in terms of time and work in the office, you have a direct impact on our ability to increase the profile and effectiveness of the campaign.

If you do these three things, you will make an important difference to the campaign for recognition of the Fro Gymraeg – a campaign which simply has to be won if we are to succeed in building a vibrant future for our Cymraeg-speaking communities.

Standing Order – Contact Member of Cymuned

To pay to the bank account for **CYMUNED**, account number 91489224, sort code 40-08-09 HSBC Bank, 19 Stryd Fawr, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion SY23 1DH

Your name: _____

Your bank: _____

Your e-mail address: _____

Your address: _____

Your bank's local branch address: _____

Your account sort code: _____

Your account number: _____

**I wish to pay £2 £3 £4 £5 £7 £10 £15 £20 £25 £50 to
CYMUNED's account every month.**

The sum in words: _____

Date of the first payment: _____

This sum is to be paid monthly until I instruct otherwise.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

**Please return this form to
CYMUNED, 64 Stryd Fawr, Pwllheli, Gwynedd LL53 5RR**