

APPENDIX B

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

CYMUNEDAU, SGILIAU A DYSGU / COMMUNITIES, SKILLS AND LEARNING

GWASANAETH YSGOLION / SCHOOLS SERVICE

DRAFT SCHOOL CALENDARS 2014 – 2016

FEEDBACK FROM CONSULTATION

The Authority's School Calendar Consultation Proforma offered schools and governing bodies the opportunity of indicating whether they supported the draft School Calendars 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 or not. The responses received were as follows:-

School Calendar	Total Responses	Responses In Favour	Responses Against	% In Favour	% Against
Draft 2014 / 2015 School Calendar	43	40	3	93	7
Draft 2015 / 2016 School Calendar	39	35	4	90	10

Schools and governing bodies were also given the opportunity of submitting additional comments if they wished and the following comments were also received:-

- 2014 / 2015 - The situation in a school on the border with England as regards to the timing of school holidays is becoming very difficult in terms of target setting for absence. This is especially so in September, when Herefordshire schools are usually back the week after Powys schools. Parents involved in tourism / farming etc. often use this week as their family holiday week, more so if they have an older child in secondary school in Herefordshire. I am aware that a calendar cannot be expected to address this issue but I would like it to be noted that border schools are often faced with parents taking holidays in Wales at term time due to the different arrangements in England.
- 2014 / 2015 - Staff feel that it is a bit harsh to lose the bank holiday for the Queen's celebrations as a bank holiday but are aware that it is there as a non-pupil day, but what can we do if we need to keep in line with the other authorities.
- 2014 / 2015 – It would be preferable for the non-pupil day Friday 27 March to be Monday, 13 April, otherwise all supported.
- 2014 / 2015 – I support the calendar but believe that, as a general principle, the Royal Welsh Show should not influence the school calendar.

- 2014 / 2015 and 2015 / 2016 – Please could we have the Spring break fixed to make equal terms.
- 2014 / 2015 and 2015 /2016 – Personally I would prefer a week less summer holiday and a week more at Christmas when the weather is cold and we are all full of germs! I also think it would suit the children more too as our primary school children are always very tired by December, but find the long break too long in the summer.
- 2015 / 2016 – Would prefer 4 April as a pupil day and have Friday, 15 July, as a non-pupil day, as 18 and 19 July is difficult due to many staff being involved in the Royal Welsh Agriculture Show.
- 2015 / 2016 – To create non-pupil days at the beginning of a new term and reduce non-pupil days at the end of summer term move 2 November non-pupil day to Monday, 4 January, 19 July non-pupil day to Tuesday 5 January, or at the beginning of another term.
- 2015 / 2016 – No use at all having two inset days in Royal Welsh Show Week – what about the staff! Add inset to Easter or Christmas holidays.

In response to the above, it is recognised that, with 13 different authorities round the Authority's borders, it is impossible to coincide with all of them in relation to school calendars and, inevitably, some situations occur where a neighbouring authority is on holiday when Powys schools are in session and vice versa.

The additional bank holiday granted for the Queen's Jubilee celebrations was added to the school holiday at the end of the Autumn Term, 2011, thus schools will not lose out because the additional bank holiday is within the half-term break.

In relation to the placement of non-pupil days within the school year, schools can convert up to 3 of the non-pupil days into 3 two-hour twilight sessions per day and, in addition, catchment groups can agree to move a non-pupil day even though it impacts on another school day.

The fact that the Authority does not have its schools in session during the Royal Welsh Show week and schools don't return until 1 September, at the earliest, because of contractual issues, means that the summer holiday is inevitably quite long.

The benefits arising from a fixed Spring holiday rather than a moveable holiday that moves with Easter, are recognised but this would only be feasible if it was taken forward on an All Wales basis.

The Authority receives comments from time to time that the Royal Welsh Show should not dictate the end of the Summer Term but it has always been the Authority's practice to ensure that schools are not in session during that week as it would be exceedingly difficult for the schools in the vicinity of Builth Wells to operate during that week and, in addition, the Authority has considered that it is important to enable families and staff to support the Royal Welsh Show as it is located within Powys. The complications of one group of the Authority's schools operating for four days when the other schools within Powys are not operating and vice versa, would create significant difficulties for operation and, therefore, the conclusion has always been

that the Royal Welsh Show should be within the school holidays. A compromise has been reached by sometimes placing one or two non-pupil days within that week, on the understanding that schools can convert these into twilight sessions if they wish.

CONCLUSION

Having considered the above responses, it has been concluded that there are no grounds for amending the draft calendars and, therefore, they are being submitted for approval without amendment.