

Statement from the Commission for a Single Written Form of Cornish

October 14, 2007

Introduction

When the United Kingdom Government amended its instrument of ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages to include Cornish, and when funding became available for Cornish language projects both from EU (INTERREG) and domestic UK sources, a window of opportunity opened for Cornish – one that few lesser-used languages ever get. It is a window of opportunity that will not remain open indefinitely. The members of the Commission have been at all times deeply conscious of this and urge others who are working for Cornish to constantly bear it in mind.

It is clearly imperative in the Europe of the 21st century to be able to write one's language if it is to be used as a living vernacular. This is true for all language, but Cornish is unique in that until that ability becomes widespread it will not be able to recover its existence as a living vernacular.

The members of the Commission have read through the submissions, whose number and length have greatly exceeded the quantity originally envisaged. We have also read the published literature, and we have followed the debate on the e-mail lists open for everyone, such as CornishOrthography, Cornishlinguistics, Cornwall24, and Kernowak. We are aware that there are other, internal fora for the different groups. We have not wanted to enter into them, but simply to follow the public debate, which in itself was quite challenging.

Though this has meant that our progress has been slower than expected and hoped, it has at the same time given us a much better picture of the situation. Here we especially mention the individual contributions, which have been direct, serious and sincere, and totally free from the personal attacks we unfortunately have seen (and heard about) in the online forums. We must admit that in reading through the submissions and other documents such as contributions to forums, various members of the Commission have been taken aback, saddened, and even shocked, by the virulence of some the actors with regard to others who can in no way be accused of being less committed to Cornish than themselves. It is our hope that you all move on to (and beyond) discussing orthographical and linguistic matters. Attacking other persons will not help the Cornish language nor will it contribute to a constructive debate. If, as we hope, they heed our call, we do not think the people making such polemic attacks will weaken their own positions. An orthography may be usable, even though its supporters act rudely. But it effectively distorts the debate, and thereby impedes the possibility of moving forward.

It was because of the passion we noted in some quarters that we preferred not to enter into debate with supporters of any of the existing orthographies: our task would have been much more difficult had been suspected of trying to negotiate with anyone behind the scenes.

When we focus away from the public debate, and read through the contributions to the Commission, we find that very many committed speakers, from all camps, are thoroughly disillusioned and disheartened by the current controversy, and feel that almost any decision,

even if it means they themselves having to make a special effort to relearn the written language, would be better than the current chaos, which is seriously holding up the social spread of the language.

Now some words on the role of the Commission in this debate. We have seen, both in public and in the contributions, formulations along the lines of "when the Commission decides, has reached its decision, rules, etc., ...". This means that what we say here today will carry weight. For us in the Commission, this is a honour and a great responsibility. We will, however, point out the limitations to this mandate. We do not have armies or language police to put force behind an arbitrary decision. If we suggest a solution which cannot be carried through, the process will collapse again. We are in fact disappointed that during the time we have worked, other Cornish bodies seem not to have agreed to the concept of a SWF.

What we have in the Commission are decades of experience from similar situations all over the world; from first-hand experience with Welsh and with Irish, with Rhetto-Romance and with Sámi, with Norwegian, Catalan and Occitan, Hebrew and Yiddish, and thanks to the expertise of the world-renowned Professor Joshua Fishman, the Commission has close-hand information about a large number of language revitalisation projects all over the world. Having combined this with the input you have given us, we think we are in a position to be able to make a positive contribution.

Nevertheless, at the end of the day the fate of the Cornish language is in the hands of the Cornish community, just as the future of any threatened language is in the hands - or mouths, rather - of its language community.

We thus feel that our role should be to point out the possible criteria for a way forward, and to weigh up the advantages and drawbacks of each of the possible solutions, bearing in mind processes followed in order to standardise the written forms of other languages across the world. We will thus present our view of the situation. We will then point out some dead ends, and explain why we think they are dead ends, and we will sketch what we do see as a possible way forward.

We underline the fact that the mission of the whole process is not to force all current users to adopt a different orthography (though if this happens freely, then so much the better) but simply to inform the authorities and the schools on the SWF they should be using in the space of a few months.

Let us start though by showing our gratitude to the specialists, and grass-root devotees, thanks to whose love and study of the Cornish language you are well-equipped, today, to take the language forward, to move it up several notches in a very short space of time. How can the Commission help to make that move feasible?

The situation

Looking at the situation at hand, we may group the alternatives as follows:

- a. to allow several orthographies to co-exist
- b. to adopt one of the existing orthographies as it is, without any regard to the arguments presented by the followers of the others
- c. to work towards a consensus through a process of compromise, striving to achieve a generalised agreement by all parties

Forgetting the various orthographies for a moment, but concentrating upon their users, we may quickly agree that a solution which unites the users is better than one which alienates

them, and that a solution which generates internal fighting is worse than a solution which generates unity.

a. Allowing for co-existing orthographies

Looking now more closely at these three alternatives, we see that the first one is the situation we have at the moment. This is not an ideal situation. Several orthographies for the same language in the same language community is a burden, especially when it gets all the attention of the few devoted speakers of the language. In order to be able to achieve your goals, you should be making teaching materials, dictionaries, novels and short stories, official forms, Wikipedia articles, spell-checks and grammar-check programmes... We all know what is happening instead, and we think we all can easily agree that this is not the society within which the Cornish language deserves to be imprisoned. There are, worldwide, several examples of co-existing orthographies, and it is as such not impossible. In some cases, like the Norwegian one, the underlying situation is one of one and the same orthography (one and the same set of sound-letter correspondences) for two different dialect bases. In other cases, like the situation for Serbian and Croatian, or like the situation for North Sámi before 1979, there are two or more orthographies for the same language. In these cases, each orthography had its own domain (geographical area, basically), and the obstacles are purely practical: Teaching materials, dictionaries, etc. could not be used for the whole language area, but had to be translated. In our case, the problem goes far beyond any practical obstacles, since the problem is perceived as being so big that it draws attention away from other, much more important work.

b. Adopting one of the existing orthographies

The second possible solution is to choose one of the four orthographies. Some people imagined that this was the Commission's task: to make a decision, point at the lucky winner, and then go home. However, for various reasons the picture is not that clear. As everyone knows, during the last year the most active supporters of three of the four orthographies have gathered together, and worked on a new proposal, known as KS (Kernowak Standard). This development has some implications. First, it makes it difficult, if not impossible, to point at any of these three orthographies, and say "use that one". Several of their followers have been willing to abandon their own, in order to achieve a compromise, and expecting them to go back on that seems to us impossible. We here clearly see the limitations of what the Commission can do. We cannot put forward unrealistic solutions.

But, secondly, this development also makes it harder to point towards the fourth one, KK (Kernewek Kemmyn), which on all accounts has the strongest numerical following, probably more than all the rest together. Had, say, UC (Unified Cornish) and UCR (Unified Cornish Revised) worked together with KK on a compromise solution, leaving out LC (Late Cornish), then the cost of dispensing with the fourth group would have been smaller. The present constellation reflects the situation well: (many) supporters of the other orthographies seem not to want KK, so they have united. Choosing KK in the present situation is thus more difficult than before.

The arguments for choosing KK as the SWF, to recapitulate them, include:

- It is the orthography with most users (probably more than the rest combined) and most teaching material

- It has a direct link between speech and writing and thus makes it easier for learners to advance (though so too might a new consensus form)
- It has a small core of very devoted and active supporters, who feel they are to thank for the revitalisation process, and have put a lot of prestige into just this orthography (so before accepting a compromise they would need to be persuaded to think afresh).

The arguments against choosing KK as the SWF include:

- When KK was introduced in 1987, not everybody was convinced. Hence, the revival was split, and it still is. Choosing KK would thus perpetuate the present deadlock. Since KK supporters have not been able to convince the others over the last 20 years, it is unlikely that they would be able to do so now. It would actually be more difficult now, since many revivalists (in all camps, including the KK camp!) hoped for a consensus outcome. This we have gleaned from many of the submissions to the Commission.
- The price of choosing KK would then be that all other parties would be disappointed or even totally alienated, and some might perhaps even leave the revitalisation movement.
- A further price that would have to be paid would be to run the risk of them not leaving quietly, but of carrying on as they have done for the past 20 years, publishing books and articles on why they feel that KK is wrong. We risk not putting an end to the controversy which would thus continue to turn others away from the revival.
- There is the question of authenticity. Even with the deadlock broken (and all or almost users on board), there would always be the risk that future users of Cornish might reopen the key issue, and cast doubt upon KK, claiming it to be a construed language, made by ignoring the historical texts. In reality all orthographies are of course construals, but KK stands out from the others as being less based on tradition, and would therefore run the risk of stirring potential protesters also in the future, if it were the SWF.
- We also fear, for example, that Cornish property owners, intending to use Cornish names on their property, might be told that the versions of the signs they wish to erect were never used in Cornwall prior to 1987. Similar experiences have arisen elsewhere: for instance, Swedish hunters (that is, the vast majority of the inhabitants of northern Sweden) wage incredibly large and fierce campaigns against using the new Sámi orthography on maps, since it "endangers safety in the mountains".

Let us stress that the Commission is not concerned about whether one orthography is more authentic than the rest. In the linguistic debate on orthographies, there is far too much use of the words "wrong, right, correct, incorrect". There are cases in which the phonological analysis of a given language may be right or wrong. (A case in point is the famous tj/dj distinction introduced in KK in 1987, but removed some years later, after it had been pointed out that such a distinction had never occurred in attested Cornish. Another mistake may be an orthography incapable of representing a length distinction that exists in the language.) But this does not mean that there is one and only one possible "correct" orthography for a language. There are an infinite number, and in cases other than those of the kind just mentioned, they differ from each other not in being right or wrong, but in being more or less good or useful.

Let us take one example: Vowel length may be represented by using an accent, by doubling the vowel symbol, or by using a single and not a double consonant postvocally. Hungarian uses the first option, Finnish the second, and Norwegian and Swedish the third. Dutch uses a

combination of the second and the third (in closed syllables, they double the consonant to mark vowel shortness, and in open syllables they double the vowel to mark vowel length. A vowel is thus short when it is followed by double or word-final consonant, and long when written twice, or followed by consonant + vowel). KK uses the Norwegian system, or rather, Norwegian uses the KK system, with a significant distinction, to which we shall return: KK always represent shortness by consonant doubling, whereas Norwegian does it only in stressed syllables.

Likewise, a given orthography may or may not be similar to earlier orthographies.

It is important to distinguish between "errors" (tj/dj) and arbitrary decisions where one solution is as good as the other (accent vs. doubling), and also the level of detail (c/k). The c/k issue is important, but should be discussed later, if and when the possibility and/or convenience of a compromise is to be discussed.

So, given that no spelling system, in any language, is perfect, we believe that KK, when it was introduced, and as a representation of Cornish as then known from the extant sources, had most of the elements for it to serve as a single written form, especially given the means to adopt amendments. Had the political support for the process existed at that time, then perhaps we would not have had to meet here today, for the language might have become embedded long since. However, that turned out not to be the case: at that time, supporters of the other orthographies felt it was too far from attested records to be able to reform it from within. Hence the present situation. We are aware of the genuine concern of some who found KK unacceptable. Nevertheless we find the common ground between them to be such as to convince us that, with goodwill and flexibility, the divergence of opinion on this point could be bridged to the satisfaction of all.

Place names are of special interest in Cornish, because they are the only words that most of the population are familiar with (whether they understand their meaning or not). Should those place names that do not conform to the SWF be adapted at once? Sometimes such a measure is advisable: for instance, in Catalonia, the recovery of democracy and home rule after the end of the Franco regime lead to the widespread recovery of place names written in the most modern form, replacing the archaic forms that were associated with the dictatorship. However, in the case in hand we feel that the spelling of existing place names should be kept outside of the current decision-making process, at least until the SWF has been widely accepted; at the same time, the norms of SWF should be applied to new place names e.g. in new housing developments, and to bilingual names of the type "Church Way / Lerg'h an Eglos ". The issue of Cornish toponymy might best be left to an expert agency (as in Ireland) and dealt with later as a separate issue.

It is true that there is a link between speech and writing in KK which, in this respect, clearly gave it an advantage over its rival UC in 1978. But this is not a virtue that KK cannot share. One may easily make other versions with the same properties. And as for its core of vocal supporters, this works both ways: just as there is a core of supporters wanting KK only, there is a core of people wanting almost anything but KK.

The most important reason for not proposing KK is that choosing KK would not represent a novel situation. This would lead to a continuation of the schism that has existed since KK was chosen 20 years ago. In fact, the situation might well get worse. Indeed, compared to the situation back then, things do now look worse for KK: it has not won the day. The protest is still there. Moreover, the opponents seem now, for the first time since 1987, to be united in KS, and actually seem to expect the Commission to come out and say: «You were right, the KK supporters *were* wrong, KK linguistics is flawed, so we will choose LC, or UCR, or UC,». It is not the intention of the Commission to do so. But it would be counter-productive

to make them even more fierce opponents to KK than they have been so far. This would be a very bad starting point for a successful revival.

Choosing any one of the present orthographies, or choosing a compromise behind which a substantial number of supporters cannot stand, runs the risk of seeing many persons leaving the revival. We see this as a real danger to the revival. Compared to many other minority languages, Cornish has a large proportion of knowledgeable supporters, capable of writing grammars, dictionaries, textbooks, etc. We urge you to see this as the resource it is: Cornish cannot afford losing its devoted protagonists, be they supporters of any of the competing orthographies.

c. Moving towards a consensus

Despite its many merits and success, choosing KK (and indeed any of the existing orthographies) would prolong the present confrontation. So all in all, in our opinion the arguments against adopting an existing form weigh even heavier than the arguments for doing so.

Note, however, that some of the key issues we have listed are in effect not linguistic in nature at all.

We will state this as follows:

In our opinion, a new consensus stands out as a better alternative than choosing any of the four existing orthographies, and we will strongly suggest to the Cornish community the imperative of arriving at a consensus.

To put it another way: we believe it is incontestable to conclude, given the build-up to the present watershed, that a compromise is better than the choice of an existing orthography.

Let us spell out what we mean: a compromise round which both KK supporters and opponents can unite, with which all can identify, is undoubtedly better than the present situation. It is the only way to ensure that the present damaging climate does not continue to prevail, as it would if one of the four existing orthographies were to be chosen.

The question can thus be reformulated: can such an orthography be found? The members of the Commission firmly believe that a compromise is possible. So many people have told us that what Cornish needs desperately is an early end to the in-fighting and for all the actors to work enthusiastically for the social spread of the language.

We would now like to sketch how. One more thing before we present that sketch, though: at this stage, whether or not one agrees with us in this belief is not that important. What is crucial to us in the Commission is whether or not you will join us in working towards a compromise. Not a compromise that will fully satisfy everyone – for that may be impossible – but one that virtually all of you can adhere to. We insist yet again: the common ground is far more important than the differences, and the work to be done once this decision is behind us is far more important.

The first point we would like to mention is a very important one, one that has been largely overlooked. The work on the KS proposal has strived to bridge the only substantial gap of the revival: The gap between middle and late Cornish. Instead of discussing whether one language is better than another, we now may concentrate upon whether one orthography is

better than another. These two questions are fundamentally different: The first question has no rational answer, whereas the second does.

What remain are orthographic disputes, and personal disputes. As for the latter, they are beyond our scope, but at least we can remind all involved parties that a language is, by definition, a collective phenomenon, and hope the disputes can be put aside. Moreover, the debate is no longer about the past, about the heritage, about the literature of the past, but about the future, in the face of which we are all equals. Moreover, there is so much work to be done once agreement has been reached: the SWF is the key that will unlock the door to the future of Cornish.

Summing up the three alternatives

As we see it, no group has the power to win the day, but each has the power to prevent any solution from being unanimous. The present situation distracts the focus from revitalisation work, and alienates potential collaborators and colleagues from each other. Choosing one of the existing orthographies represents a way of prolonging the split, as at least some of the other participants will almost certainly carry on their protests. By prolonging the split in the revival we will also fail to decide on the orthography that the authorities are crying out for, and we risk the split situation being used as an excuse for our false friends in official administration to hold up the revival. «We are all for Cornish», they will say emphatically, «but unfortunately there will be no support, as there are these three dissidents here (still) clamouring for a different orthography».

The issue of "winners" and "losers" seems to be a preoccupation for many submitters. Some have said they will accept any recommendation the Commission may make, for they are keen to move on: and we are firmly convinced that right now, in the present situation, all Cornish speakers are "losers". The controversy is dramatically holding back the spread of the language and the increase, which may be spectacular, in those actively learning and beginning to use the language. If an SWF can be arrived at and win the support of nearly all users of Cornish, then everyone can become a "winner".

The way forward: A concrete plan to achieve a compromise

Now to the future. We think a compromise is possible, and we will now sketch how. We will do this in some level of detail. All suggestions on the table are possible ways of writing Cornish, and in addition to that there are indefinitely many more ways of writing it. We are here on behalf of the Cornish language, and what the Cornish language needs is a compromise solution behind which the whole revival movement can accept. Seen from our standpoint, the most important criterion is that a solution must be as acceptable as possible to all parties. Thereafter it is a plus if it is easy to learn, and if it shows continuity with the texts, but these two educational and linguistic considerations are secondary to the need for an agreement.

The new situation, compared to the situation one year ago, is that we have two compromise candidates, KS and KD (Kernewek Dasunys). Neither is built from scratch: they both owe a great deal to the work of the developing of existing orthographies.

Of these, KS has been too contested to be a good starting point for the move towards a compromise. Its main virtue lies in its attempt to unify middle and late Cornish into a single linguistic system. In our opinion, we should all acknowledge this remarkable achievement,

and the linguistic work behind this. It should also be noted that the work behind KS started the process towards a compromise.

The linguists in our Commission see three main problems with KS. The first problem is the attacks it has received. One reason it has been attacked is probably that one of its authors is one of the most profiled proponents of finding an alternative to KK. Another problem, and the one that has been most visible in the online debate, is its use of diacritical marks. The third problem lies in its treatment of vowels.

As for KD, we see one drawback: it is the most open of all proposals, and hence the one leaving most unresolved issues unaccounted for. We would nevertheless like to see this weakness as an opportunity. It is open because it is meant as a compromise, a compromise to be hammered out in the forthcoming discussion.

Thus, as we see it, a compromise somewhere in between KK and KS, building on KD, but with an input from KS, seems to us to be a possible path forward. In this way, the SWF can aim to make a very large number of people to have to make a relatively small adaptation.

Two of the main linguistic stumbling blocks of the discussion, representation of consonants and representation of vowel length, seem to have found a solution in KD: the traditional representation of consonants, combined with a clear representation of vowel length. KD is more open on the issue of vowel quality, and of choice of vowel symbols in many detailed cases: here we believe input from KS could be valuable.

Let us elaborate on these issues, again stressing that our point here is not to dictate a solution, but to show that solutions are possible. Take vowel length, for instance. Using accents for vowel length seems to us very problematic, for three reasons:

1. the fierce opposition to it among KK supporters;
2. the tendency to see accents as a pedagogical device, to be dispensed with by fluent speakers (cf. English, where "rôle" is correct, but so is role);
3. widespread computer illiteracy.

The first two reasons carry much weight: the opposition to the use of accents shows that the issue could develop into a major obstacle for KK supporters. Again, a parallel from Sweden comes to mind: The marking of a third length grade was not made in the new Sámi orthography, since the majority of the Swedish Sámis did not want an orthography «with hooks and hakes». In that case, the resistance against diacritics resulted in an inferior orthography, since an important distinction was lost. In this case, fortunately, there are alternatives.

Even more disturbing is the tendency we observe, even among accent supporters, to see accents the same way as they are seen in Russian orthography: there, stress accents are used in pedagogical texts for foreigners, to show where the text is, but the accents are removed as soon as they reach some stage of fluency, and in all general text. But dropping length in Cornish would be like dropping the final e in English *pine*, *hide*. To make it work, then all must use it, all the time. We thus feel that Cornish needs a more robust way of marking length. Also, computer illiteracy should be taken into account. Although all the proposed accented vowels may be produced by the English out-of-the-box keyboard layouts, already installed on all computers, finding these layouts on the control panel, and choosing Latin 1 or Unicode for the email program, seem to be difficult for many, and the difficulties will probably grow proportionally to the opposition against accents.

Going from an accent system to a letter doubling system is not without precedence: In 1973, Greenlandic buried 250 years of tradition, and moved from a system in which vowel + circumflex marked long vowel, and vowel + acute accent marked that the following consonant was long, to a system where double symbol marked length.

In this case KD represents a substantial compromise. Instead of marking short vowel with double consonants in all syllables, it does so only in stressed syllables. This has a double payoff: the resulting word forms are shorter, and they remind the user where the stress is. The use of fewer double consonants also gives an orthography closer to the attested texts, a welcome outcome seen in the perspective of a possible compromise. The system itself is not unheard of: 13 million Norwegians and Swedes use it on a daily basis.

In the area of vowel quality, KD leaves many open issues. On the other hand, there seems to be a many-to-one relation between KD and KS vowel symbols. This seems a good reason to look at how KD copes with this issue.

In the area of consonants, the k/c issue seems to be hotly debated. This we may brand the *King Cong* issue, or writing consonants following the sources or not. Here, KK has *k* only. There is of course no minimal pair between *k* and *c*. But the medieval practice (known from English and Scandinavian) has a phonetic base: the *k* is palatal, and the *c* is velar. Since it has the support of both articulatory phonetics (if not phonology), historical tradition, and, not least, our knowledge of English, changing what has been called the "German" "k only" policy into velar *c* and palatal *k* should be seen as a small compromise for KK users. We understand that the *K* may have become some sort of *shibboleth* after 20 years of proud use of *K* across the board, but this is not an issue that deserves to block consensus. Cornishmen used the *c*, it is easy to use the *c*, as all know how to use it, and if it helps the revitalisation, then it is really needed.

As we see it, this is thus not a big "loss" for KK: and no pedagogical principle is violated.

Another issue, over *hw/wh*, has raised the eyebrows of the non-linguists in the Commission, for it seems to be just a symbolic issue, by which we mean that either form is equally easy to learn.

We have a strong feeling that if we are able to agree on principles, and reduce the discussion to whether we should write *wh* or *hw*, then finding a common solution should be quite manageable.

Let us summarise as we did before. The main argument against a new consensus is obvious:

- Moving to a new orthography will imply a transitional phase of uncertainty, and hard work for everyone involved. Meeting deadlines will be more challenging.

The arguments in favour of a new consensus are equally obvious:

- Given that the different parties gather behind it, it will create a new enthusiasm for the revival. Very many of the submissions by ordinary Cornish users to the Commission stress this fact: The disputing parties will be able to devote their energies to advancing the use of the language, as soon as a solution has been arrived at and quarrelling has ceased.
- With the orthographic wars behind us, the focus can be put on building a language infrastructure.
- Text can be converted from one orthographical system to the other by semi-automatic means, and teaching material must be rewritten anyway.

- Even though not all teaching material will be ready for next autumn, providing material for the most important courses should be possible.
- As long as the revival is split, opponents in various official bodies, be they political or educational, will have an easy job keeping Cornish out of Cornwall.

We believe that this is a very important moment. We also hope that you can share with us our main conclusion:

A consensus behind which everyone may stand is far better for the future of the language than a prolonged split.

How can this be done in practice?

At this moment we advise you not to define your position immediately. Rather, we would suggest a "truce" at this stage, and a collective focus upon the details of the compromise. There will be plenty of time to work out how much - or, as we suspect, how little - adaptation, in practice, current users of each of the various orthographies will be asked to make.

We suggest that we all, during this conference, spend our time investigating the proposal, and looking at concrete ways of finding a compromise, each of us putting forward what we think others will generally accept. The common ground is, we are convinced, far, far greater than the differences, which have been blown out of all proportion. We believe that much can be done during this weekend, and we also believe that the most important step forward would be the will, and the demonstration of ability, to forge a common way forward. If this weekend can constitute such a breakthrough, we believe the details may be fleshed out quite quickly.

This compromise should take into consideration not just linguistic and historical issues, but also social and educational, and even personal, ones. Any consensus will mean everyone will have to relearn, so let us aim for a solution which means that as few people as possible will have to make a large effort, and the greatest possible number will have to make a small effort: this will help to maximise the mobilisation in favour of the SWF.

In order to keep you in this spirit, we will, before we move on to the discussion, remind you of what stands ahead of us, after a consensus has been reached. We in the Commission will happily assist you if requested to do so in a facilitating role.

We suggest that a way forward might be to agree to the appointment by the Commission of an independent arbitrator, advised by a small ad hoc group reflecting different viewpoints, whose ultimate decision would be binding. We are aware that such a procedure has worked satisfactorily in other situations.

After consensus: a new start

The Cornish revival has for the last 20 years discussed orthography. In order to create a living Cornish language community you need to discuss, and conduct, some other, pressing activities. Courses, pedagogical activities, etc. should of course carry on. You have within the revival expertise on Cornish grammar and lexicon. You will need a common lexicographical base. Without a split revival you will be able to coin neologisms as part of a common endeavour, rather than sitting in different corners making different, conflicting terms. You will need computer programs to convert between different orthographic forms. You will need spellcheckers. You will need morphological analysers, in order to collect new lexemes, or lexeme frequencies. You will need to train instructors, translators, etc.

All of this requires new bodies, new working groups, and new synergies. As the leading specialists in Cornish, please try and work these out as soon as you can, together with the authorities.

If at any time in the future you feel we can help you in these tasks, please call on us: we are all much more deeply committed to the Cornish cause today than we were just six months ago!

Closing remarks

The decision is not for the Cornishmen (and women) of today. It is for the future generations. It is in their interest that the decision has to be taken, though ironically their opinion, being in the future, cannot now be heard. It is up to us, here today, to ensure that they will be grateful at the level of commitment shown not to our own (usually legitimate) points of view, but to the sacrifices that allowed the language to move ahead. Everyone needs to put aside their own personal views (though we appreciate that this is more easily said, and requested, than done!) and try and think in terms of the future. The stakes are so high for the language itself, and very much higher than what the defenders, up to now, of the virtues of one or other orthography, stand to gain or lose.

Can we put aside our personal feelings, and work for the (common) good of the future generations?

Variety is the spice of life. Only in totalitarian regimes are agreements unanimous. In our opinion, good will and courage are needed for a satisfactory solution to be found which will satisfy the ambitions of the Cornish-speakers of today and the needs of the Cornish-speakers of tomorrow.

The authorities are waiting anxiously for the Partnership's report. We are certain that if you accept our recommendation – which will mean more work in the short-term, but less in the long term – then it will very soon be possible to speak of the Falmouth spirit, and even, perhaps, of the Falmouth Agreement.

Notes

Abbreviations

EU	European Union
KD	Kernewek Dasunys
KK	Kernewek Kemmyn
KS	Kernewek Standard
LC	Late Cornish
UC	Unified Cornish
UCR	Unified Cornish Revised

Websites

KD	www.dasunys.net
KS	www.kernowak.com