**Embargoed until 00.01 6 February 2023**

**More than 25,000 children across Wales will share bilingual rhymes, stories and songs together as part of BookTrust Cymru’s annual Big Welsh Rhyme Time**

* **Children to share rhymes, poems and stories in nurseries, schools, libraries and at home across Wales between 6-10 February 2023**
* **Families invited to take part at home using new bilingual rhymes available from Bwci Bo creators Joanna Davies and Steven Goldstone, poet and writer Sarah King and actress and poet Rhiannon Oliver**
* **Big Welsh Rhyme Time is organised with the support of the Welsh Government, to support children’s language, development and their wider engagement with reading**

**06/02/2023** – BookTrust Cymru, the children’s reading charity, is encouraging families, schools, and early years spaces across Wales to join in with **Big Welsh Rhyme Time**, a week-long national celebration of sharing bilingual rhymes, poems and songs with children in their early years.

In 2022, more than 25,000 children across Wales took part in Big Welsh Rhyme Time. This year, so far, 530 early years settings including nurseries, schools and libraries across Wales have signed up to use the rhymes, resources and films, meaning thousands of children across the country will be taking part in a collective national moment of bilingual rhyming-related fun.

To support the week’s celebration **Joanna Davies and Steven Goldstone** (also known as Joey Bananas and creators of the Bwci Bo characters), poet and writer **Sarah King** and actress and poet **Rhiannon Oliver** have created a host of new bespoke bilingual rhymes and resources designed to be enjoyed together with children.

Running from **Monday 6th February - Friday 10th February 2023,** Big Welsh Rhyme Timeconnects children and families across Wales to share bilingual rhymes together and to demonstrate how rhyming and sharing stories bilingually can be accessible for all children and incorporated into everyday life - at home, in nursery, in a library or at school.

Big Welsh Rhyme Time is developed with the support of the Welsh Government who are committed to “igniting a passion for reading” for Welsh children. As well as creating fun moments for children, engaging with books, stories, rhyme and songs at an early age is essential in encouraging a playful approach to language and social skills development. Rhymes help support the holistic development of babies and young children and providing opportunities and space for children to build their confidence to speak, sing and join in.

Families and early years settings can still take part in their own rhyming fun at home using the videos and downloadable resources that will be available at [www.booktrust.org.uk/thebighwelshrhymetime](http://www.booktrust.org.uk/thebighwelshrhymetime) or @BookTrustCymru on twitter and are encouraged to share their own rhyming experiences on social media.

**Kate Cubbage, Director at BookTrust Cymru said:**

*‘Creating memorable moments to share stories, songs and rhymes can be crucial for supporting children’s early communication, language and reading skills but moreover it can be enormous fun! Thanks to the funding from Welsh Government and our network of partners, we’ll be listening out for all the rhyming, singing and wordplay that will be taking place right across Wales. There’s still time to join in! Share your examples of how your children get on with their own rhymes using the hashtag #RhymingFunForEveryone. Families and early years practitioners tell us how Big Welsh Rhyme Time supports them to strengthen children’s relationships with language, build their confidence and support them on their wider reading journey. There’s still time to get involved and show us how your children get on with their rhyming.”*

Actress and poet **Rhiannon Oliver** who has composed a new bilingual action rhyme for this year’s celebration added:

*“Rhyme is a fantastic way of exploring the playfulness and power of language. I am delighted to be helping children throughout Wales celebrate Big Welsh Rhyme Time 2023!”*

To find out more visit the [BookTrust Cymru website](https://www.booktrust.org.uk/what-we-do/booktrust-cymru/the-big-welsh-rhyme-time/) or follow us on twitter @BookTrustCymru

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For further information please contact Amisha Koria, on press@booktrust.org.uk

**About BookTrust:**

BookTrust is dedicated to getting children reading because we know that children who read are happier, healthier, more empathetic and more creative. Their early language development is supported and they also do better at school.

We are the UK’s largest children’s reading charity; each year we reach more than 2 million children across the UK with books, resources and support to help develop a love of reading, because we know that reading can transform lives.

We work with a variety of partners to get children excited about books, rhymes and stories, because if reading is fun, children will want to do it. Our books are delivered via health, library, schools and early years practitioners, and are supported with guidance, advice and resources to encourage the reading habit. [www.booktrust.org.uk](http://www.booktrust.org.uk)