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# CYTÛN POLICY BULLETIN

## JULY/AUGUST 2019

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### INTERWEAVING THE CLIMATE CHANGE EMERGENCY AND THE BREXIT OPPORTUNITY/EMERGENCY

On April 29 this year, Lesley Griffiths, the Minister for the Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs, announced that the Welsh Government was [declaring a climate emergency](#). The Government said, “The declaration sends a clear signal that the Welsh Government will not allow the process of leaving the EU to detract from the challenge of climate change, which threatens our health, economy, infrastructure and our natural environment.”

The linkage made in the statement between two of the greatest issues of our time – Brexit and



Picture: Wales Online

climate change – is a linkage which has continued over the ensuing months. As Extinction Rebellion protestors closed streets in Cardiff city centre in July, drawing the attention of commuters to respond to the climate crisis by changing our mode of travel, Welsh Government was starting to consult on its new strategy for agriculture in Wales under the title [Sustainable Farming and Our Land](#). The central thesis of the document is that our mode of farming needs to change for the same reason.

This consultation follows on from a consultation last year under the title [Brexit and our Land](#). Earlier this year, the Welsh Government [published its response](#) to the [many responses received](#), including that from [Cytûn](#). The new consultation confirms that the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) will come to an end as the UK leaves the European Union. In its place, the intention is to introduce payments based on the principle of sustainable land management. This includes reducing emissions which change the climate and also taking steps to mitigate the changes already taking place, such as planting more trees, increasing soil carbon and improving the condition of peatland. Where the market does not provide a fair price for such activity, it will be possible to draw up an agreement with Welsh Government to receive payments for undertaking such work. The Government has also published a [comprehensive evidence pack](#) on the current situation of agriculture in Wales.

A further consultation document will be published by Welsh Government prior to the Royal Welsh Show proposing a new Food and Drink Strategy for Wales. It is anticipated that the food and drink industries will be amongst those most affected by leaving the European Union, so the new strategy will need to be significantly different from [the last strategy, published in 2010](#).

Welsh Government has also announced that it now supports solving the impasse regarding leaving the European Union by holding a further referendum, and that the Government would [campaign to remain in the European Union](#).

At the same time, Brexit preparations continue. Cytûn’s Wales and Europe Working Party has welcomed especially the package of support announced by Welsh Government for [citizens of the European Union, the European Economic Area and Switzerland who are living in Wales](#). This package tackles some of the issues which have been concerning the Working Party concerning lack of practical support to citizens as they apply for Settled Status to live in the UK. Cytûn is committed to continue to work with Welsh Government to give publicity to what is available, and encourage our member churches to offer pastoral support to European citizens as they seek to

ensure their future amongst us. The Working Party is also continuing to correspond with the Home Office regarding the situation of UK citizens in the other countries of Europe, especially should we leave the EU without agreement being reached.

Welsh Government has also published further guidance regarding a no-deal exit for [businesses in Wales](#), [projects funded by the European Union](#), and the [health and social care sector](#). All Welsh government publications in this area are available on the website [Preparing Wales](#), which also includes links to relevant material on the UK Government and European union websites.

As we go to press, there is no certainty when or under what terms the withdrawal will take place – if at all. The Assembly Research Service publishes politically impartial information about the process and latest developments on the website [The Assembly and Brexit](#).



Uncertainty faces us also regarding the effects of climate change. This may be one reason why climate change protestors draw attention to the need for greater action by creating uncertainty for commuters and others. On July 14, the evening prior to the start of protests in Cardiff, an interfaith vigil was held in Cathays Park. Amongst the speakers was the Revd Sarah Jones, St John’s Church, Cardiff, who said, “We need to live out our Christian calling, and those taking part in Extinction Rebellion are helping us along the way.” Rt Revd June Osborne,

Bishop of Llandaf in the Church in Wales, commented, God calls each of us to care for the poor, to care for our neighbours, and to behave like stewards rather than consumers of our natural environment. We support peaceful protests that raise awareness of the need to act now, to find the political will to protect the interests of future generations.”

First Minister Mark Drakeford referred to the climate emergency – amongst other factors – in announcing on 4 June that [no new M4 relief road will be built](#) through the Gwent Levels. This announcement received a mixed response, with some concerned about the economic implications and the continued impact on the air quality for residents of Newport, while others – including the [Future Generations Commissioner](#) – welcomed this indication that the announced “emergency” had led to a change of policy in such an important field.

The Future Generations Commissioner is encouraging faith groups and others to help contribute to her 2020 report [Our Future Wales](#) by uploading stories, statistics and suggestions to the [People’s Platform](#). Public bodies and others will be able to access the data set and filter the stories by location, theme and well-being goal. This will help create an archive of lived experience and a national ideas bank, helping the Commissioner to better understand what communities are thinking and experiencing and highlighting opportunities and challenges that the Commissioner’s office and public bodies across Wales need to listen to. In the meantime, on July 16 a very helpful summary of progress thus far was published in the Welsh Supplementary Report to the United Nations as part of the UK’s reporting on progress in sustainable development.

Cytûn, at the request of our member churches and organisations, has arranged a special day conference in Community House, Newport on **Monday October 14** to engage in a wider discussion on climate change. Dr Hefin Jones from Cardiff University will address the conference about the facts of climate change, and a range of organisations which offer practical ways for churches and individuals to tackle the matter will be exhibiting and talking about their work. Full details of the conference and how to reserve your place are on the back of this Bulletin and on the front page of [www.cytun.cymru](#). Spaces are limited, so early booking is advised.

# THE THIRD SECTOR AND WELSH GOVERNMENT

Twenty years after chairing the first ever Voluntary Sector Partnership Council, on 15 May 2019 Jane Hutt AM, in her new role as the Deputy Minister and Chief Whip, hosted her first meeting with 12 Third Sector Partnership Council (TSPC) representatives.

Religion is represented on the Partnership Council by the Inter-faith Council for Wales. The Lead Representative is Revd Gethin Rhys (Cytûn) – Revd Aled Edwards, now Chief Executive of Cytûn, was present at the first meeting. The Minister was joined in May by Uzo Iwobi, former TSPC representative for the BME Communities category, who was congratulated on her appointment as Specialist Adviser on Equalities to the Minister.

The TSPC tabled a paper, 'Achieving prosperity for all, together', which presented three strategic issues: sustainable resourcing of the third sector; Brexit; and the implementation of the principles of involvement and co-production, as core components of Welsh Government's two ground-breaking pieces of legislation, the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) and the Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales). The Deputy Minister underlined the established status of the TSPC in providing a forum for discussion and for working with government to take forward actions.

TSPC representatives noted that the expectations of the sector from government and other public bodies, in the context of the new pieces of legislation and austerity, are greater than ever before - and therefore the arrangements for joint working and funding are of critical importance and need to be looked at afresh. The Code of Practice for Funding the Third Sector applies to all Welsh Government and hypothecated funding, and is an important mechanism for promoting good funding practices across the public sector. The Minister announced a re-launch in June of the Funding and Compliance Sub Committee, which holds government to account on the Code of Practice and promotes good practice.

The Minister was appraised of the work of the Wales Civil Society Forum on Brexit, a partnership between the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) and the Wales Governance Centre at Cardiff University, as well as an EU Transition Fund project, led by WCVA, to examine the impact of Brexit on community services. TSPC members reflected their perspectives on the insecurity of EU migrants; Welsh Government's leading role in raising the bar amongst UK devolved nations on equality and human rights; work on the future of regional investment in Wales and the proposed Shared Prosperity Fund; and the sector's role in the foundational economy. The Minister agreed to look at how the sector could be more involved in feeding into the EU Transition Cabinet Committee and spoke about the different ways in which Welsh Government is responding to support work with BAME communities.

TSPC representatives talked about their experiences of how the involvement and co-production principles of the Future Generations Act and the Social Services and Well-being Act are playing out in practice. The Minister said that the Acts require a culture change in the public sector and that the knowledge and expertise of the third sector around co-production and involvement is hugely valuable. It was agreed that the sector would work with government to set up a forum, to provide a link with the third sector, trade unions and the private sector, to scrutinise and advise government on the implementation of the Future Generations Act.

The Minister also drew attention to the Special Leave entitlement for Domestic Abuse Victims, with encouragement for third sector employers to consider how it can be incorporated into their work. Guidance for workplaces has been developed by Welsh Women's Aid and the EHRC for workplaces.



Left: Revd Gethin Rhys concentrating on the discussion at the Partnership Council. Picture: Welsh Government.

# PORTUGAL CHALLENGES MINIMUM ALCOHOL PRICE



In 2018, following years of debate and with the support of a number of Cytûn’s member churches, the National Assembly passed the [Public Health \(Minimum Price for Alcohol\) \(Wales\) Act](#). Following further consultation, the Health Minister, Vaughan Gething AM, announced in February that the minimum price would be 50p per unit. This is the same as the minimum price introduced in Scotland, which may have led to [the lowest sales of alcohol for 25 years](#) in that country.

However, on May 29, Mr Gething [announced](#) that Portugal had challenged the minimum price under the European Union’s single market arrangements, claiming that it would [make some of its products less competitive](#). Wales remains subject to these arrangements as it has not yet left the EU. This means that introducing the minimum price will need to be postponed until at least early 2020.

Mr Gething said, “I remain fully committed to introducing a minimum price for alcohol in Wales. Alcohol is a major cause of death and illness in Wales and once implemented – will make an important contribution to reducing the devastation caused by alcohol related harm in Wales. Taking into account a range of factors, we remain convinced that a 50p minimum unit price is a proportionate response to tackling the health risks of excessive alcohol consumption. We consider that a 50p minimum unit price will strike a reasonable balance between the anticipated public health and social benefits and intervention in the market. In the meantime, our preparations for implementation will continue.”

## BANKING AT POST OFFICES IN WALES

Many churches and members are frustrated at the closure of bank branches throughout Wales. At the request of the Free Church Council for Wales, the Society of Friends in Wales and the Church in Wales, Cytûn wrote to all the major banks seeking information about their policies in this regard, and about the lack of Welsh language services through online and mobile banking. All but one of the banks replied, but only one offered any hope of a halt in branch closures or improving Welsh language services – a number of banks closed branches in Wales during our correspondence.



Pic: Llandudno Junction Post Office

We also corresponded with the Post Office, and representatives of Cytûn and some member churches met in May with Stuart Taylor, Post Office External Affairs Manager for Wales and the South West. We learned that all 930 Post Office locations in Wales provide transactional banking services on behalf of the banks. This means that 99% of all personal debit card holders and 95% of all small business and charity account holders (including those of Building Societies and online banks) can use the Post Office to pay in cheques and cash and withdraw cash. Banks are gradually issuing

cards for small business/charity accounts to reduce the clearing time, and customers need to contact their bank about this. This should be of help to church treasurers. We did note some concerns about the mobile Post Office service, and we are following these up with Mr Taylor.

The Post Office pays Sub-Postmasters per transaction, and also a fixed fee to operators in “community branches”, defined as being the only retail outlet within 0.5 mile. It is no longer a requirement to have a dedicated PO member of staff; all trained staff can operate the branch when required. The PO is in principle willing to consider applications to run a branch from a local church so long as, the branch would be viable and there is someone willing to act as Sub-Postmaster.

The House of Commons Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee is currently [inquiring into the Post Office](#). The Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee of the National Assembly is [inquiring into access to banking](#), and Cytûn and the Church in Wales have submitted evidence.

## **A MAJORITY OF THE WELSH POPULATION STILL CLAIM A RELIGION**

[New statistics](#) published by Stats Wales in June, based on the Annual Population Survey 2015-17, provide an interesting and informative picture of religious identification in Wales today. The statistics show that some assertions often made in the media are not true.

In particular, the figures show that over half of the population of Wales identified as Christian (52.8%), whereas 42.7% of the population stated they had no religion. However, these figures varied by region. In North Wales, 60.0% of the population identified as Christian and 36.9% stated they had no religion. This compares with 48.6% and 46.1% of people in South East Wales respectively.

Nearly 50,000 people (1.6% of the population) identified as Muslim. Over two thirds (69%) of the Muslim population in Wales were domiciled in South East Wales.

A higher proportion of women than men identified as having a religion (61% compared with 53%) and the proportion of people identifying as having a religion increased by age group. This contrasts with the proportion of people stating they had no religion which notably decreased as age increased.

### **‘Your Rights, Direct Payments & the Act’**

Several meetings attended by Cytûn in recent weeks on matters relating to social care indicate that there is still widespread lack of understanding of the provisions of the [Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#) to ensure that all those in need of care and their carers receive an assessment of their needs and that those needs are met.

The [All Wales Forum](#) of Parents and Carers of People with Learning Disabilities have produced an excellent short film explaining the situation, which can be accessed at <http://bit.ly/CarersRightsAWF>

The Forum says, “The Act is the first piece of legislation of its kind that *really* puts carers at the heart of it. This Act has given more rights and responsibilities to families but has also implemented new duties on local authorities.” In this film, made following a series of roadshows arranged by the Forum, two carers discuss their experience of the Act, how becoming aware of their rights has affected them and the changes they have made as a result.

Cytûn commends this film to all those in need of care (for whatever reason) and their carers.

### **What about your care in old age?**

Over half (58%) of the population of Wales is not making any provision for their old age, suggests [new research](#) published on 17 July by the Welsh Government. However, 70% of those surveyed said they were concerned about the social care support they may need in the future.

The results also highlighted that only 27% of the nation were likely to be saving money for any future social care they may need. Over 7 in 10 (72%) respondents, however, believed that everyone should make provision for their old age when they are young and in work.

Whilst people may not be making provision, they were concerned about the social care support they may need. Concerns included the cost, the quality and the availability of social care. The research, which saw 1000 people interviewed across Wales, showed that fewer than 3 out of 10 people (27%) felt they knew a great deal or fair amount about how the social care system works in Wales.

The Welsh Government has established an Inter Ministerial Group on Paying for Social Care, chaired by Minister for Health and Social Services, Vaughan Gething. Over the next six months, the group will publish further research and consider and refine the options for a levy or alternative funding mechanism to pay for social care.

## Are books the best medicine?

Professional health workers in Wales can now prescribe free books to help people live with their mental health conditions or deal with difficult feelings and experiences using what is known as 'bibliotherapy' by the experts behind the scheme.



The *Reading Well on prescription for mental health* has been developed by the Reading Agency with public libraries and leading health organisations such as the Royal College of Psychiatrists, Mind, the Royal College of General Practitioners, the British Psychological Society and the Royal College of Nursing, together with individuals who have experience of mental health needs and their families and carers. The scheme was launched in Wales (pictured left) following its success in England, which has seen 931,000 people borrowing over 2 million Reading Well books from

public libraries.

Free copies of the books are available for members of the public to borrow from public libraries in Wales, together with promotional material including leaflets which list the books available. The Welsh Books Council is arranging translation of some of the books into Welsh and all the programme materials are bilingual. The collection of 37 books includes information on health, self-help and inspiring personal stories, such as *Reasons to Stay Alive*, by Matt Haig, who examines his personal experiences such as coming close to committing suicide aged 24, and the *Recovery Letters*, a selection of heartrending letters written by people who have recovered or are recovering from depression.

The author Malan Wilkinson from Cricieth, "It has been a year since I wrote my book about living with a mental health condition and it is true to say that reading and writing about my experiences has been invaluable for my own health. After six years of living with mental health difficulties, it's wonderful to see this scheme being launched in Wales. Having this collection of 37 self-help books will be of great assistance to people across the country."

For further information about Reading Well on Prescription for mental health, see: <https://reading-well.org.uk/wales>

## CONTACTING CYTŪN'S POLICY OFFICER or subscribe to the Bulletin by email



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**MAE'R CLIMATE  
HINSAWDD YN CHANGES  
NEWID POPETH EVERYTHING**

**Cynhadledd NAWR YW'R AMSER I WEITHREDU  
NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT Conference**

**Tŷ'r Gymuned, Eton Road, Casnewydd NP19 0BL  
Community House Eton Road, Newport NP19 0BL**

**Llun/Monday 14 Hydref/October 2019, 9.30am – 2.15pm  
Am ddim. Darperir cinio. Free of charge. Lunch provided.**

# Cynhadledd NAWR YW'R AMSER I WEITHREDU NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT Conference

Llun 14 Hydref 2019      Tŷ'r Gymuned, Eton Road, Casnewydd NP19 0BL  
Monday 14 Oct. 2019      Community House Eton Road, Newport NP19 0BL

Mae parcio ar strydoedd cyfagos yn gyfyng iawn. Mae Eton Road llai na milltir o waith cerdded o orsaf rheilffordd Casnewydd. Mae bysiau 6, 8A, 8C, 74A ac X5 yn mynd i'r Cenotaph, ychydig o waith cerdded i ffwrdd, a bysiau 42 a 43 bob 40 munud i Corporation Road/Malvern Road gerllaw. *Parking on nearby streets is very limited. Eton Road is less than a mile walk from Newport rail station. Buses 6, 8A, 8C, 74A and X5 run to the Cenotaph which is a short walk away, and buses 42 and 43 run every 40 minutes to Corporation Road/Malvern Road nearby.*

## Rhaglen

Cyrraedd, cofrestru, coffi	9.30am
Croeso a chyflwyno Gweddi/myfyrdod byr	10.00
<b>Newid hinsawdd: Wynebu'r ffeithiau</b> Dr Hefin Jones, Prifysgol Caerdydd	10.10
Coffi a chyfle i weld yr arddangosfeydd	11.00
<b>Ymateb yr eglwysi a mudiadau</b> Gwaith EcoChurch, Cymorth Cristnogol, Operation Noah, Maint Cymru ac eraill	11.30
Cinio ysgafn llysieuol (wedi'i ddarparu)	12.30
<b>Beth nesaf? Bord gron i drafod beth</b> mwy all eglwysi a mudiadau ei wneud	1.15
Gweddi/myfyrdod byr	2pm
Ffarwelio ac ymadael	2.15

## Programme

Arrivals, registration, coffee
Welcome & introduction; Brief opening prayer/meditation
<b>Climate change: Facing the facts</b> Dr Hefin Jones, Cardiff University
Coffee and look around exhibitions
<b>Churches' and movements' responses</b> The work of EcoChurch, Christian Aid, Operation Noah, Size of Wales and others
Light vegetarian lunch (provided)
<b>What next? What more can and should</b> churches and other groups be doing?
Short closing worship/meditation
Goodbyes and depart

**Mynediad am ddim. I sicrhau lle, cysyllter â**  
[gethin@cytun.cymru](mailto:gethin@cytun.cymru) erbyn 7 Hydref 2019

**Admission free. To book, please contact**  
[gethin@cytun.cymru](mailto:gethin@cytun.cymru) by 7 October 2019

Mae croeso i bawb o bob ffydd a chred ymuno â'r diwrnod, a drefnir gan Cytûn (Eglwysi ynghyd yng Nghymru) ar ran eglwysi a mudiadau Cristnogol yng Nghymru. Bydd holl siaradwyr y diwrnod, gan gynnwys arweinyddion gweddi, yn dod o draddodiadau Cristnogol. Bydd cyfieithu ar y pryd.

*People of all faiths and beliefs are welcome at this day, organised by Cytûn (Churches together in Wales) on behalf of churches and Christian organisations in Wales.*

*All the speakers and worship leaders are from Christian traditions.*

*Sessions will be led in Welsh (with simultaneous translation into English) or in English.*

Cytun - Eglwysi Ynghyd yng Nghymru/Churches Together in Wales

58 Richmond Road, Caerdydd/Cardiff, CF24 3AT. Tel: 029 2046 4204

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