

Minutes of Free Church Council of Wales meeting on 14th November 2017

**The meeting was held at the South Wales Baptist College,
58 Richmond Road, Cardiff CF24 3UR from 11am to 3pm.**

Present

Ian Morris
Meirion Morris
Paul Rochester
Rheinallt Thomas (President)
Gethin Rhys
Martin Spain (Treasurer)
Gareth Morgan Jones
J P Ramos
Irfon Roberts
Alun Tudur
Eirian Wyn
Steffan Wiliam (Translator)
Sasha Perriam (Minutes)
Vaughan Salisbury

Apologies

Chris Gillham
Aled Jones
Helen Jones
Judith Morris
Peter D Richards
Sally Thomas
Geraint Tudur

Opening prayers were led by Ian Morris

Welcome and Apologies

Rheinallt welcomed members to the meeting and recorded the apologies. He thanked Sasha Perriam for agreeing to minute this meeting and for her efficiency. Steffan was thanked for translating the meeting. It was noted that Helen Jones has experienced a recent bereavement. Rhys and Helen Jones were thanked for their efficiency in ensuring that meeting papers had been circulated. It was noted that Peter Dewi Richards will not be in a position to deputise for the Moderator due to family illness.

Rheinallt agreed to send a note to Peter Dewi Richards.

A representative would need to be appointed in place of Peter Dewi Richards as required by the President

Minutes of 16th May 2017

These were accepted and approved.

Matters Arising

Training **(5)**. Rheinallt had received correspondence from Aled Jones but some clarity is required. Trinity St David's have employed new staff and will be providing full time theology degrees. It had been noted that some Welsh students are studying theology degrees at the University of Birmingham. It was resolved that further lucidity is required about theology training provision in Wales. St Padarn's have some resources for training though it is not available in Welsh.

Gethin agreed to contact Aled Jones to seek clarity prior to the May 2018 meeting.

Rheinallt will write to University of Wales Trinity St David's and to Bangor University to enquire about their plans for theology training from 2018. It was important to enquire as to what staff would be available for the theology courses.

Rheinallt would contact Dr Hefin Jones to enquire about theological training through the medium of Welsh.

(6a) Denominations

Revd Derwyn M Jones is still unwell.

The Secretary agreed to write to him on behalf of the Council.

The Presbyterian Church in Wales.

Rheinallt informed members that Meirion Morris has agreed to continue in the role of General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church of Wales. Ifan Roberts has been appointed to provide administrative support in the office in Whitchurch.

President's Report

A comprehensive report had been distributed to members highlighting the President's activity between May 16th 2017 and 31st October 2017. The President has sought to increase the profile of the Free Church Council of Wales and the diary of events attended is also included within the Treasury and the 4 Tudalen. Rheinallt thanked Cytûn for the joint work together which has been hugely successful. Rheinallt informed members that Ynyr has now left Cytûn but thanked him for his work with setting up a Free Church Council of Wales webpage and for adding some information on the page. It was hoped that the Free Church Council of Wales website can be further improved in the future. Gethin reported that Ynyr's role would be advertised and that a job description is being discussed.

Rheinallt thanked Ynyr for all his work. Alun thanked Rheinallt for all his work on behalf of the Free Church Council of Wales.

North Wales Area report

Many local church representatives attended a service to present the Gee Medals. The Council of Sunday Schools have been passed the remit of dealing with the Gee medals covering the North Wales area. Irfon reported on behalf of the South Wales area and said that the Council of Sunday Schools will be taking on responsibility for the distribution of the medals for this area.

Members of the Free Church Council agreed to present a Gee Medal to Vivian Williams to thank him for his work on behalf of the Free Church Council of Wales.

Irfon Roberts is standing down as representative on the Free Church Council of Wales. Eirian Wyn will continue to attend meetings.

Constitution

Martin had been responsible for updating the constitution in the past. Rheinallt agreed that the constitution needs to be updated in the light of both North and South Wales branches ceasing to exist.

Rheinallt, Helen and Martin would need to meet to update on the constitution.

Vacancies on SACREs

Vacancies on SACREs were discussed. Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire have vacant Free Church places on their SACREs. It is a matter for each Local Authority to decide how to do this, and they are required to take into account the relative strength of each denomination or faith in their area. Some invite the Free Church Council of Wales to nominate someone. If we are unable to nominate anyone, the seat is likely to be lost to other denominations or faiths. Gethin had distributed the November Policy Bulletin to members. Gethin was thanked for this work.

There was some reflection concerning the recent events at the Senedd. Discussion took place concerning pastoral care both in the public arena and within the denominations.

It was suggested that it might be good to establish a forum under the auspices of the Free Church Council of Wales to address pastoral care.

Rheinallt agreed to send a note to the Llywydd of the Senedd.
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The Secretary would invite a member of Cynnal to a future meeting of the FCCW to give a background on the work of Cynnal.
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Gethin highlighted that Aled would be leading with the arrangements for the 2018 Eisteddfod in Cardiff. The format of the 2018 Eisteddfod will be very different to previous years. Smaller units will be utilised and places like WCVA and the Methodist Church in Loudon Square used

Denominational Reports

Salvation Army

The Salvation Army has undergone a restructuring process since 2015, with a loss of 6 staff members. The Salvation Army are managing a heavy workload with less staffing. They have experienced some problems with the financial system.

The management of the re-structuring process had meant that not all meetings could be attended.

Presbyterian Church of Wales

Meirion thanked members for their messages of support. Meirion had been appointed to continue in the role of General Secretary and Ifan Roberts had been appointed to manage the office and its staff. There are discussions with the Charity Commission regarding the registration of churches and chapels. Their central work has been their Mission Training plan. There is a young Patagonian working with the Presbyterian Church of Wales.

Congregational Federation

Martin announced that Chris Gillham will be retiring in October 2018. Martin informed members that he had been appointed as the new President of the Congregational Federation of the United Kingdom

Union of Welsh Independents

Members were informed that 100 people from Madagascar will be coming to Wales in 2018 to celebrate 200 years of the first Welsh missionaries arriving there. The UWI will be appealing to churches to provide financial support for the current work of the church in Madagascar, FJKM. They are seeking to ensure that their church congregation look at the Bible and they are looking at producing a DVD as a resource to create generate discussions.

Baptist Union of Wales

Dr Christian Williams is working with the Baptist Union of Wales in place of Helen Wyn, who is unwell. A questionnaire has been sent to members of the Baptist Union of Wales regarding Seren Cymru, the weekly publication of the BUW, asking for views. A trip to Nepal in conjunction with

BMS is being arranged. They are looking for young people to take part in their 2018 gap year in ministry.

Methodist Church

The Methodist Church are in the process of arranging a training course for their lay leaders which will also be provided in Welsh. Chaplaincy with Police Forces, the Royal Welsh Show and in the field of sports are areas of priority for the Methodist Church

Education Matters

Vaughan had distributed a paper. Reference was made to Revisions to the curriculum. It was noted that Cytûn will continue to participate fully in the development of the curriculum. Vaughan addressed collective worship within schools following presentation of petitions on the matter to the National Assembly. Cytûn continues to follow the debates, and we do not expect any major changes. Vaughan referred to the resources available for Education Sunday. Reference was made to recent Estyn publications which focus on many areas of work. Discussion took place regarding the translation of 'Reforming Christianity' publication to be available bilingually for Welsh schools (Key Stages 2-4). Paul Rochester agreed to investigate financial sources within the Free Churches Group for England and Wales for this work. There were no references to Wales contained in 'The Free Church Voice in Higher Education'.

It was noted that there is room for a representative from Wales on the Free Church Voice in Higher Education Group.

Rheinallt informed members concerning the publication 'Encouraging Religion, A History of the Christian Education Movement Wales 1965-2015' by Aled J Jones. Copies of the publication were available at the meeting.

Accounts

Martin distributed copies of the Accounts to members. The Salvation Army have yet to pay. It was noted that the German Lutheran Churches may wish to become part of the Free Church Council of Wales. Martin had located a contact.

It was agreed that £500.00 would be given to Cytûn for their work.

Report from Revd Paul Rochester

Paul Rochester thanked members for inviting him. His main work priorities would be to raise the profile of the Free Churches Group in England and Wales. Work will be completed around the public square and the wider church in 2018. There is work taking place on how the churches are contributing to improve social cohesion within the communities of England. The Welsh Government had asked the Faith Communities Forum to compile a report on the same field for Wales.

Paul agreed to share the re drafted report with Gethin and Free Church Council of Wales.

Chaplaincy, Education and Health were discussed.

Dying Matters

Paul Rochester invited members of the FCCW to attend the Dying Matters Conference. Gethin explained that in Wales this work is currently taking place via Sally Thomas with many "Byw Nawr" events.

Rheinallt thanked Steffan for his work. Sasha was thanked for co-ordinating lunch and for due care to members of the Free Church Council of Wales.

A blessing was given by Rheinallt.

The next meeting would take place on Thursday 24th May 2018 from 11am at the South Wales Baptist College