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# CYTÛN POLICY BULLETIN

## OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2021

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### CYTÛN AT THE COP

International summits can easily be 'hyped' as more important than, in the event, they turn out to be. However, the United Nations International Climate Conference, [COP26](#), to be held in Glasgow on October 31 – November 12 really is important.

The changes to the climate that are caused by human activity on Earth, are already changing the lives of many people for the worst. The initial effects are being felt most severely in low-lying countries (affected by sea level rise) and hot countries (where even a small rise in average temperatures makes the land unproductive and even uninhabitable). These countries are often amongst the poorest in the world.



**UN CLIMATE  
CHANGE  
CONFERENCE  
UK 2021**

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ITALY

We in Wales are already aware of increased incidence of storms, floods and exceptionally hot weather. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in its [latest report](#) issued in August in preparation for COP26, indicates that severe effects will soon be felt in every part of the world, and

that these will worsen if rapid steps are not taken to reduce the world's carbon emissions.

Cytûn member organisations [Christian Aid](#) and [CAFOD](#) have already had to repurpose some their funding, much of it raised by church members in the UK, to helping people to adapt to a changing climate. Along with other development agencies, they will be present at COP26.

These agencies are, along with Cytûn and many churches throughout Britain and Ireland, part of the [Climate Sunday](#) initiative. Convened by the



Pic: Canva

Environmental Issues Network of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, this initiative has been working with churches of all Christian traditions to arrange climate-focused worship, to make their own local commitments through [EcoChurch](#) or [LiveSimply](#), and to speak up for change at COP26.

A [nations' Climate Sunday service](#) was held in Glasgow Cathedral on September 5. Those who took part included members of the clergy, Christian charities and young people, with the aim of bringing the environmental commitments made by more than 1,950 congregations before politicians and the wider Church. Many of those involved were 'speaking up' for the first time, joining thousands in signing the ['Time is Now' declaration](#), which calls on the UK government to go further and faster on climate action before hosting the COP26 summit. As the service began, the bell of the cathedral rang, both as a call of welcome and call for climate justice, linking to the Celtic tradition of bells calling to account. Music included hymns by leading modern composers Keith and Kristyn Getty. The service closed in commending COP26 in prayer (including in Welsh and Gaelic) and pledging the nations' churches to continue climate action. The service can be [viewed online](#), as can a [video presentation](#) of a small selection of the work being undertaken by churches and Christian organisations across Britain and Ireland.

It is not too late for local churches of all traditions to use the range of resources, in both English and Welsh, which are available for [worship](#) and to get to grips with [particular aspects](#) of a Christian response to climate change which are available on the Climate Sunday website.

Revd Canon Carol Wardman, Church in Wales Bishops' Adviser for Church and Society said: *"2021 has been a year of action on climate change for the Church in Wales, and we are pleased to be part of the national Climate Sunday Service ahead of the crucial COP26 meeting in Glasgow. This year has seen every diocese register with A Rocha UK's Eco Church scheme, we have declared a Climate Emergency, appointed a Climate Champion, taken the decision to dis-invest from fossil fuels, and committed ourselves to becoming carbon-neutral by 2030. Tackling climate change is literally a life-and-death issue, and we pray that governments at home and across the globe will have the courage to act before it is too late."*

Reverend Judith Morris, General Secretary, Baptist Union of Wales *"We are delighted to be a part of Climate Sunday which has succeeded in bringing together so many denominations and agencies seeking to protect our planet. We hope that this collective impact will help secure ambitious and bold targets at the forthcoming COP26 enabling both global and local changes to be made so as to safeguard creation and the lives of our brothers and sisters who are already experiencing the very real cost of Climate change."*

Climate Sunday and its member organisations and churches will be present at COP26 in Glasgow. Cytûn will be represented by the Revd Gethin Rhys. On November 1, Climate Sunday will have a stall in the exhibition zone where we can meet delegates. Throughout COP26, we will have a video presentation in the digital Green Zone, available anywhere. We will also be supporting the many activities of worship, commitment and campaigning which members of the Climate Sunday coalition are arranging in Glasgow and online. Further details will be available on our social media channels on [Twitter](#) @CytunNew and [Facebook](#).

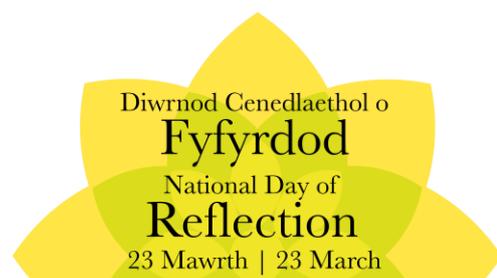


Not everyone will be able to get to Glasgow in person, so on Saturday November 6 there will be a Global Day of Action where people can make their voices heard wherever they are. Cytûn, CAFOD and Christian Aid are part of [Climate.Cymru](#) and [Stop Climate Chaos Cymru](#), which bring together a range of organisations across Welsh society who are concerned with the climate crisis. They are co-ordinating the Day of

Action in Cardiff and in other parts of Wales, and details of these activities will also be available on our social media channels.

## A day to remember and reflect

Following the first much appreciated day in 2021, the charity [Marie Curie](#) is arranging another National Day of Reflection on 23 March 2022 (the second anniversary of the first lockdown) to remember all who died in the Covid-19 pandemic and provide an opportunity to pause and reflect. The day is supported by the members of the [Compassionate Cymru](#) Coalition, of which Cytûn is an active member.



In preparation for the day in 2023, Marie Curie is encouraging everyone to [plant bulbs](#) which will flower in the spring to contribute to the day. This would be a great activity for churches, church societies, Sunday Schools and children's clubs to join. Further details are available [here](#).

# How Can Places of Worship Help Tackle the Housing Crisis?

In response to the housing need crisis in Wales a new alliance has been formed between housing associations and national homelessness charity and member of Cytûn, Housing Justice Cymru. It is hoped that this new partnership will greatly increase the number of affordable homes being built through the charity's 'Faith in Affordable Housing' programme, which sees surplus church land and buildings transformed into genuinely affordable, high-quality rented housing.



Since 2016 the *Faith in Affordable Housing* programme has brought together housing organisations and churches from various denominations to transform surplus land and disused buildings into affordable housing. To date the programme has facilitated the delivery of almost 100 affordable homes across Wales. Some projects are new build, some are conversions, and all are unique.

In July 2020, a review of the project concluded that, in order to significantly increase the output of genuinely affordable homes, the programme would need a more focused approach, working with a smaller number of selected housing associations. Bonnie Navarra, Director of Housing Justice Cymru said, "We want to work with the housing organisations who have the financial capacity and skills to build high quality housing but, importantly, who also share our charity's values around helping those in need and addressing the housing crisis head on." Following the evaluation process, Housing Justice Cymru have announced their new strategic partners: First Choice HA, Adra, Grŵp Cynefin, Pobl Group, Monmouthshire Housing Association and a consortium led by Cardiff Community Housing Association (including FCHA, Melin, Newydd and Valleys to Coast).

Chair of Housing Justice Cymru, Bishop John Davies, said, "This is a great opportunity for churches and housing associations to work together to address one of the major social problems of our age. Everyone deserves a decent home that meets their needs, and we hope this next phase of the programme will produce more homes for the people most in need."

*Example from the programme, St Matthew's Church in Newport:*

*Before – Disused, empty church*

*After – High quality, affordable rented housing*



Pics: Housing Justice Cymru



Housing Justice Cymru are excited about the prospect of these new partnerships, and believe that this is a vital step to further empower church and faith groups across Wales to contribute to the development of high-quality affordable homes and vibrant communities. Housing Justice Cymru will continue to support churches and chapels through the process of redevelopment, to help faith groups release capital for refurbishments, reordering and additional mission or legacy projects, whilst simultaneously helping to solve the housing need crisis. Having worked closely with local congregations and property personnel for the last 5+ years, Housing Justice Cymru recognise that each denomination has different protocols for the sale/lease of assets, and thanks to their expertise and experience across the housing sector, they are able to assist churches to realise the full potential of each project.

For more information, visit [www.housingjustice.org.uk/cymru/fiah](http://www.housingjustice.org.uk/cymru/fiah) or to discuss a specific church / chapel, contact the project coordinator Sian Bradley [s.bradley@housingjustice.org.uk](mailto:s.bradley@housingjustice.org.uk)

## HOW CAN CHURCHES HELP AFGHAN REFUGEES?

Since the withdrawal of British, American and other European forces and personnel from Afghanistan, triggering the mass evacuation of Afghan citizens who had worked with them, or who were deemed to be at particular risk under the Taliban regime, there has been an outpouring of concern about how to help and welcome these refugees, who are predominantly in family groups, into our country. As a [Nation of Sanctuary](#), Wales and its faith communities are eager to play their part in this process.

- **Accommodation**

All Welsh Local Authorities have indicated that they will take part in the resettlement scheme, but meeting accommodation needs remains a challenging task. The Welsh Government is asking particularly for 3-bedroom properties which can be made available, if possible for up to a year. Letting and financial arrangements will be handled by the Local Authority.

Although very grateful for the kindness of those who have offered rooms in their own homes, Welsh Government advises that at present this is not being sought.

If you may be able to offer appropriate accommodation, please contact your Local Authority Housing Department or [refugees@gov.wales](mailto:refugees@gov.wales)

- **Further Information**

Details of the Home Office schemes for the resettlement of Afghan refugees can be found [here](#).

Particular advice from Welsh Government is [here](#) and a statement from Jane Hutt MS, Welsh Minister for Social Justice, sets out the Welsh Government's position [here](#):

- **Faith Resources**

The Church of England has posted on its [website](#) some signposts to information, and access to resources from various places to assist with study, reflection and engagement on refugee and migration issues, including advocacy and campaigning. The information is largely from an English perspective, but there is reference to some Welsh organizations. As immigration and asylum issues are managed by the UK Home Office, the overall situation is very similar.

*Canon Carol Wardman, Bishops' Adviser for Church & Society, Church in Wales*

## SUPPORTING UNPAID CARERS IN WALES

[Carers Wales](#) and [Carers Trust Wales](#) are supporting a programme to be launched by Welsh Government during the coming weeks. Many unpaid carers are unaware of their rights; furthermore, many are yet to identify as an unpaid carer.

Building on the Welsh Government's 2019 carers rights campaign, starting on Monday 11 October, and running for four weeks, you will hear and see a call for people to come forward to find out more about the support available to them as an unpaid carer. The call to action will be to a dedicated page on the Welsh Government website or to make contact with their local authority (or a relevant third sector organisation).

The campaign will use the hashtag **#makeyourselfknown** so please share and connect.

### **Do you want to help somebody to get their life back on track?**

Housing Justice Cymru are looking for new volunteers to work with people who are moving on from homelessness and who may need help with administrative tasks (e.g. opening a bank account), emotional support (e.g. a coffee and a chat), or practical help (e.g. putting up a shelf).

If you're kind, caring and compassionate, then Housing Justice Cymru would love to hear from you. Talk to Tom about volunteering today: [t.nevitt@housingjustice.org.uk](mailto:t.nevitt@housingjustice.org.uk) or learn more here: [www.housingjustice.org.uk/cymru/citadel](http://www.housingjustice.org.uk/cymru/citadel) Places are available in Wrexham, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot.

# 'Home shouldn't be a place of fear' - #livefearfree

Welsh Government's domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence and Coercive Control Campaign

Ddylai neb deimlo'n  
ofnus gartre

Mae help ar gael, ddydd a nos

Home shouldn't  
be a place of fear

Help is available, 24/7



#BywHebOfn

[llyw.cymru/bywhebofn](https://llyw.cymru/bywhebofn)

☎ 0808 80 10 800

#LiveFearFree

[gov.wales/livefearfree](https://gov.wales/livefearfree)

Welsh Government's #livefearfree campaign aims to let those at risk of domestic abuse, sexual violence and coercive control know that help is available 24 hours a day, every day.

There are a number of ways to contact the Live Fear Free helpline for help and support – by telephone 0808 8010800, also live chat, text or email, visit our website for information.

The current campaign phase includes advertising on TV (ITV, Sky AdSmart and S4C), regional and community radio, social media and digital channels. The campaign will also be advertised on pharmacy medication bags.

To find out more visit: <https://gov.wales/live-fear-free/staying-safe-during-coronavirus-emergency>

## CONTRIBUTING TO THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM IN WALES

Cytûn continues to keep our member churches and organisations in touch with the development of the new schools curriculum for Wales. The Strategic Stakeholder Group, of which we are members on behalf of the Wales Faith Communities Forum, was unable to meet during the pandemic, but the Third Sector Partnership Council (where we are represented by Siân Rees of the Evangelical Alliance) has continued to meet with the ministers of the education department. Cytûn is also part of a new working group that will create an official route for organisations beyond the education sector to contribute resources and materials to schools that can help them shape their new local curriculum, in line with the requirements of the new framework.

Cytûn has also been part of a group that discussed the guidance for syllabuses for Religion, Values and Ethics (previously Religious Education) and Relationships and Sexuality Education, and we await Welsh Government's response to consultations held on these during the summer.

The Welsh Government has announced further details of the [curriculum implementation timetable](#). Primary schools will introduce their new local curriculum in September 2022 and secondary schools for years 7 and 8 in September 2023 and higher years thereafter. Full information on the new curriculum can be found on the Welsh Government [Hwb website](#).

# EUROPE AND THE CHURCHES OF WALES

Following the EU referendum in June 2016, Cytûn – at the request of its member churches – established a Wales and Europe Working Group to monitor developments as the UK left the European Union, and – where appropriate – to respond to Welsh and UK Government consultations and take part in discussions with other civil society organisations.



The Working Party has been active for more than five years, meeting in 2017 – along with the general secretaries of Christian ecumenical councils from across the continent of Europe - with then First Minister of Wales, Carwyn Jones (pictured

above). The Working Party has also taken an active part in the Wales Civil Society Forum on Brexit convened by the Wales Council of Voluntary Action (WCVA) and the Wales Governance Centre at Cardiff University. The co-ordinator of the Forum, Charles Whitmore, has been an active member of the Working Party, along with representatives of Cytûn's member churches and organisations.

Now that the process of leaving the European Union has been completed, the Working Party is turning its attention to the many connections which Cytûn and its member churches have, not only with the European Union, but across the continent of Europe. Some of these links are ecumenical (such as through the [Conference of European Churches](#), [Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe](#) or the [Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe](#)), others are related to a particular tradition or denomination (such as the [Diocese in Europe](#), the [Council of European Bishops' Conferences](#) or the [Quaker Council for European Affairs](#)). The Working Party is keen to draw up a list of all those links in order that churches and Christian organisations can, within their limited resources, support one another and avoid unnecessary duplication. We are therefore inviting all our members to let us know of the links they have and provide us with public contact details or web addresses, so that the wide range of pan-European links can be of as much benefit as possible. Please contact Gethin Rhys (details below) with any information you wish to share.

The Working Party will also be represented at a webinar organised by [Faith in Europe](#) on October 21, which aims to contribute to the European Union's [Conference on the Future of Europe](#). Although being organised by the EU institutions, this conference is considering issues beyond the borders of the EU and also – importantly – the EU's relationships with countries outside the EU. This is important not only for Wales and the UK, but also for movements such as Fair Trade, for whom continued access to the EU market is vital. There may be a few places still available at this conference, and readers of the Bulletin who would like to attend are invited to contact Gethin Rhys (details below) or to register their interest on the Faith in Europe website [here](#).

## CONTACTING CYTÛN'S POLICY OFFICER

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*Hapus i gyfathrebu yn Gymraeg ac yn Saesneg.*

*Happy to communicate in Welsh and English*



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