
CYTŪN POLICY BULLETIN

EASTER 2022



YOUR LOCAL PANTRY – DIGNITY, CHOICE, HOPE

With concerns about food and fuel poverty on the rise, Gethin Rhys visited [Hope Pantry, Merthyr Tydfil](#), part of the [Your Local Pantry](#) scheme sponsored by [Church Action on Poverty](#), a body in association with Churches together in Britain and Ireland.

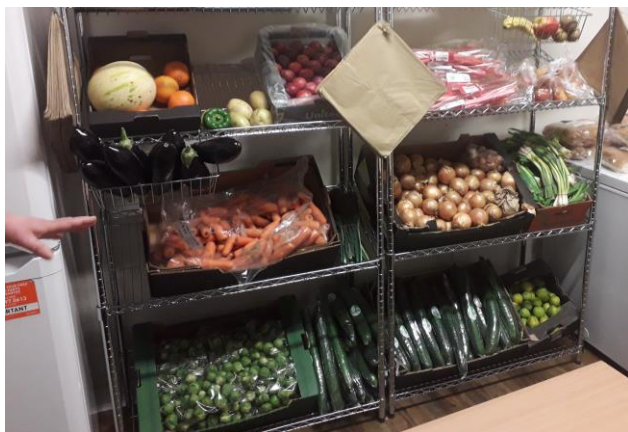
An unobtrusive side door into the imposing Hope Church in the centre of Merthyr leads into the local grocers' shop. But it is no ordinary grocer. Hope Pantry offers members, for £3.50 per week, a shop worth 3 hearts or 8 diamonds (each heart or diamond often buying multiple items). Members can swap goods worth 1 heart for 2 diamonds.

The Pantry's basic stock comes from [Fareshare](#) at £3.50 per week, but this is supplemented by fresh fruit, vegetables and bread which are free of charge to members, having been saved from landfill. There is also some food at or past its 'best before' date, but still edible, which is free of charge. 0.5 tonnes of food is supplied each week, and all of it is sold. The Pantry therefore makes a big contribution to tackling food waste and its environmental cost as well as tackling poverty. The Pantry also offers a selection of toiletries and cleaning materials, funded by grants and donations.



The Pantry is stocked and open on both Tuesday mornings and Friday afternoons. Fridays are busiest – with a queue down the street well before opening time when I visited. An orderly queuing system, with numbered tickets, allows volunteers to offer tea and coffee to those waiting, to help those who need assistance with shopping, and to operate the till. Many of the customers meet here regularly for a coffee and a chat as well.

Membership is open to all in the Merthyr Tydfil borough, with no need for referrals or means testing. Gellideg has its own independent community pantry. Both pantries along with others are members [Merthyr Tydfil Food Prosperity Network](#), which aims to eliminate food insecurity in Merthyr Tydfil.



Heidi Jacobson, the welcoming and energetic Pantry Coordinator, paid tribute to the support provided by the Your Local Pantry organisation. By setting up the systems for membership, payment, stock control and so on, they make this a feasible project for a local church or community group. Pantry Network Development Coordinator James Henderson would love to hear from other churches interested in supporting their community in this way. He can be contacted via james@yourlocalpantry.co.uk or on mobile: 07897 551 987

The [2021 Social Impact Report](#) – which contains many quotes from volunteers and customers of the pantries in Wales – shows the value of the project. With the [Wales Governance Centre's analysis](#) of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's [Spring Statement](#) showing that the average household in Wales will be £315 per year worse off as a result of the UK Government's tax and benefit changes, that impact can only increase.

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UKRAINE – WAR AND ITS REFUGEES



Russia's invasion of Ukraine has shocked and provoked a warm response across Welsh churches. Chief Executive of Cytûn, Revd Aled Edwards, presided at a multi-faith vigil on the steps of the Senedd on March 6. There were moving contributions from contributors including two young Ukrainian people living in Wales, Mick Antoniw MS, Counsel General to the Welsh Government, who is of Ukrainian descent (below), and politicians from the other major parties.

Cytûn has been involved in forming the response of Wales as a Nation of Sanctuary to welcoming refugees from Ukraine. Further details on steps taken by Welsh Government can be found [here](#). Organisations, including churches, who can offer large-scale help with accommodation, transport, goods or translation can indicate their willingness to help [here](#) and individuals who wish to offer accommodation or other help can find details of how to do so [here](#).

Cytûn strongly recommends that support is offered only through legitimate and trusted organisations. In addition to Government schemes, Housing Justice Cymru has a hosting scheme to accommodate asylum seekers arriving in Wales - from Ukraine or other countries – who are unable to access state support. Further details on that plan can be found in the [Policy Bulletin Feb / March 2022](#) or from Romy Wood via r.wood@housingjustice.org.uk



Cytûn and the Welsh Government recommend that help to those still in Ukraine and surrounding countries should be offered through the financial appeal of the Disasters Emergency Committee of leading charities, [DEC Cymru](#). Further details on Christian Aid's role can be seen [here](#), and the CAFOD appeal can be found [here](#). Although we appreciate the heartfelt desire to send goods, fleets of lorries travelling across Europe have unwanted consequences in terms of creating bottlenecks that impede aid, and can undermine the local environment and economy. The charities at DEC Cymru have the means to secure the purchase of what is needed, where and when it is needed, through your generous donations.

[Bible Society](#) has called on everyone to remember Ukraine, in conjunction with the country's churches, by praying Psalm 31 daily at 3pm (5pm Ukraine time). Christian Aid urges churches to join in a prayer for Ukraine especially at 2pm on [Passion Sunday, April 3](#). The prayer is:

God of all peoples and nations,
who created all things alive and breathing, united and whole,
Show us the way of peace that is Your overwhelming presence.
We hold before you the peoples of Ukraine and Russia, every child and every adult.
We long for the time when weapons of war are beaten into ploughshares
when nations no longer lift up sword against nation.
We cry out to you for peace;
Protect those who only desire and deserve to live in security and safety
Comfort those who fear for their lives and the lives of their loved ones
Be with those who are bereaved.
Change the hearts of those set on violence and aggression
And fill leaders with the wisdom that leads to peace.
Kindle again in us a love of our neighbour,
And a passion for justice to prevail and a renewed recognition that we all play a part in peace.
Creator of all hear our Prayer and bring us peace. Make us whole. Amen

CHURCHES ENCOURAGED TO 'COUNT ON NATURE'

Churches across the country are preparing for the annual Churches Count on Nature event. This 'citizen science' event will run between 4-12th June, welcoming people to churchyards and encouraging them to record what animals and plants they see. That data will then be collated on



the biological records hub, the National Biodiversity Network. The event is jointly run by the conservation charities [A Rocha UK](#) and [Caring for God's Acre](#) together with the Church of England and the Church in Wales, and is open to churches of all denominations.

Last year more than 540 activities and events were organised by churches across England and Wales. People submitted 17,232 recorded pieces of data on wildlife they saw, with 1,700 species recorded.

This year's event will take place during the same week as Love Your Burial Ground Week (4-12th June). The Bishop of St Davids, Joanna Penberthy, the Church in Wales' lead bishop on the environment, is urging people to take part. She says, "Churches Count on Nature is an easy and fun activity for people of all ages to take part in. It's a chance to learn about and appreciate the precious world literally on our doorstep and realise our responsibility to nurture and protect it. I hope all our churches with burial grounds will register and take part this year and record what treasures of the natural world they observe."



Last year, many churches used Churches Count on Nature as an opportunity to reach out to their local community. Parishioners at Llandygydd Churchyard, near Cardigan, for example, were joined by people in the community to set up moth traps and embarked on a bat hunt over two days. Organiser, the Revd Anne Beman, said about 20 took part, including children. "We were fortunate to see about 30 brown long-eared bats leaving their roost in the church. They were identified at a later date by their droppings. On the Saturday morning, we checked the moth traps and identified some very beautiful specimens, with wonderfully interesting names such as the Brussel's lace moth, the Lobster moth and the Blood Vein moth. Then we started a 'bio-blitz' survey in the churchyards. It was a great success, and we couldn't have managed without the help and knowledge of the wildlife group members."

Andy Lester, from A Rocha UK, says, "Churches Count on Nature is a unique opportunity for those who love their churchyards and church spaces to take part in the largest ever nature count. With nature still in decline nationwide this count will provide valuable data on what is happening to wildlife. In turn that will help us to collectively work to take targeted action for nature's recovery." Harriet Carty, Director of Caring for God's Acre, says, "Through initiatives such as this we are gaining more insight into the importance of churchyards and other burial grounds as refuges for nature. With more than 20,000 across England and Wales these special places have never been such crucial havens for wildlife."

For more information, see <https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/get-involved/love-your-burial-ground-week/>

Pictures supplied by Caring for God's Acre: St Andrew's, Norton, Powys (top); St Michael's Llandre, Ceredigion.

COVID – RESTRICTIONS END, INQUIRY BEGINS

At the time of going to press, [Welsh Government](#) plans to end the final remaining Covid restrictions, introduced under the Public Health Act 1984, on Easter Monday, April 18. The separate measures introduced under the UK Coronavirus Act 2020 lapsed on March 24. When the Welsh regulations end, the legal situation will return to that which prevailed prior to March 2020. This means that the responsibilities of those who are trustees or managers of places of worship and community centres, and those who organise public events including worship, will revert to the previous Health and Safety, Safeguarding and other requirements. Risk assessments made under this legislation will need to include an assessment of the risks associated with Covid along with risks associated with the transmission of other infectious diseases.

However, Cytûn is aware that the attitude of church members, as of others in the population, towards risk – especially the risk of catching or passing on infectious illness – may well have changed following the experiences of the past two years. We understand that Welsh Government intends to replace the many pages of [guidance](#) for different kinds of organisations and activities – including the [guidance pages for places of worship and funerals](#) – with a single set of guidance notes of a much more general nature. For many voluntary trustees and managers, this will mean they need to source bespoke guidance elsewhere.

Cytûn is considering what it may be able to offer on its webpage in place of our current [guide to Covid regulations](#). We will, as soon as possible after the new Welsh Government guidance is published, produce a briefing with some pointers to the most important parts of it, and links to other sources of information (such as the [Health & Safety Executive](#) website). Unfortunately, Cytûn is not funded to a sufficient level to enable us to seek specialist advice on Health & Safety, Safeguarding, and so on, and as Cytûn itself does not own or manage places of worship we have no standing to seek bespoke legal advice – which, in any case, will vary from denomination to denomination depending on their different legal structures and church order.

We would therefore welcome suggestions from member churches and organisations as to what might be most helpful in this new situation. Cytûn will need then to consider how much of our limited resources in terms of staff and finance can be devoted to meeting the needs identified.

As Covid gradually recedes, the UK Government has established the [UK Covid-19 Inquiry](#), chaired by Baroness Hallett. A [consultation on the terms of reference](#) of the UK inquiry closes on April 7. Cytûn has submitted a response, noting the importance of faith and other voluntary groups and asking that they be explicitly included in the terms of reference, and noting the importance of inquiring into issues surrounding end of life care and the treatment of the recently deceased and recently bereaved. We also hope to meet with the inquiry team shortly to discuss ways in which Christian churches and other faith groups may submit evidence to and participate in the inquiry.



Cytûn has also been in touch with the independent Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice Cymru group. They explain their role as follows:

This group has been set up for those bereaved by decisions taken by the Welsh government before and during the Covid-19 pandemic in Wales. We have been calling on the Welsh government to start an immediate Wales specific public statutory inquiry. Having met with the First Minister a number of times he has taken a different stance and Wales will now be in the UK inquiry. However, Wales cannot be just a footnote in a UK Government inquiry - decisions made in Wales must be properly scrutinised. The inquiry will look at what happened, why it happened but most importantly how we can make it better. This is why it's so important to hear about your experiences. If you have been bereaved by Covid-19 in Wales our group can represent you in the UK inquiry. Your voice will form part of the evidence that will ensure changes are made.

Readers who are interested are invited to join the group's [Facebook group](#) or to get in touch by email: cymru@covidfamiliesforjustice.org or Twitter: [@cymru_inquiry](#)

Cross-Party Group on Faith

Ukraine: Are Wales' faith communities doing enough?

Wednesday 4 May 2022, 12.00 – 13.15

via Microsoft Teams or phone conference

For further information or to reserve a place, email Jim Stewart on jimstewartwales@gmail.com

Faith, families, and recovery

Online forum - 10am to 11.30am, Thursday 12 May 2022

Alcohol Change UK and Adfam are inviting you to take part in an online event focussing on the role of faith in many people's lives when they're struggling with alcohol, drug or gambling issues.

We hope that this will be the start of a journey that will help treatment services have a better understanding of the role of faith in the lives of individuals and families; and help faith organisations better understand alcohol, drug and gambling issues.

The event will be opened by our two guest speakers:

- Alison Mather, Director of Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs (QAAD)
- Iman Atta, Chief Executive of Faith Matters

Followed by opportunities for discussion.

To book your places, contact Andrew Misell at Alcohol Change UK andrew.misell@alcoholchange.org.uk

EXTENDING REGISTRATION OF YOUTH WORKERS

Welsh Government is currently [consulting](#) regarding registration of youth workers. At the moment, youth workers in a faith based setting in Wales are not required to register with the Education Workforce Council. It is intended that this exemption (along with several others) be removed. If this intention is realised, it would become illegal to employ a youth worker who has not met the registration criteria and registered. This consultation also asks for responses as to whether volunteers in youth work should have to register. Although the consultation document recommends against this, it says that Welsh Government is open to persuasion on this matter. This registration would be additional to the requirement to obtain DBS checks under the safeguarding regime.

It is important that those best qualified in each member denomination and organisation has the opportunity to read the consultation and to respond. Cytûn will prepare a composite response, if requested, but we would recommend that each denomination/organisation respond directly also. The consultation and response form can be found here: <https://gov.wales/new-registration-categories-education-workforce-council> The closing date is May 24 2022. If you wish to contribute to a joint response, we will need to receive your comments by **Monday 16 May 2022** via gethin@cytun.cymru

VOLUNTEERING WALES GRANT SCHEME

The 2022-25 [Volunteering Wales main grant scheme](#) is now open to applications using WCVA's [Multipurpose Application Portal \(MAP\)](#). This year's Volunteer Wales Main Grant scheme will focus on projects that tackle barriers to volunteering, give a positive experience for the volunteer and a long-lasting impact on the community. Funding will be available up to £25,000 per annum, over a maximum of two years. If your organisation is interested in accessing the Volunteering Wales main grant scheme please [visit our Volunteering Wales grants page](#) for more details or contact volwalesgrants@wcva.cymru

WELSH GOVERNMENT APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME OPENS

The Welsh Government is advertising up to 50 apprenticeship opportunities. This year they are offering three different pathways, all leading to an NVQ level 3 qualification.

- Business Administration apprenticeships
- Digital Data and Technology
- Finance Professions Apprenticeship

Welsh Government welcomes and encourages applications from those currently underrepresented in our workforce, such as Black, Asian and minority ethnic people and disabled people.

Virtual Candidate Information sessions are being held to enable people to find out more about the different pathways on offer, the application process and the support that will be made available to applicants. This will include how we can remove any barriers which may prevent people from applying and how we can make reasonable adjustments to ensure the recruitment process is fair and accessible for you.

5 April 2022 14:00 – 15:00 Tickets on [Eventbrite](#)

12 April 2022 11:00 -12:00 Tickets on [Eventbrite](#)

The Digital Team are holding a specific session about the Digital, Data and Technology scheme on 11 April 2022 at 11:00 –12:00. If you're interested to learn more about the DDaT scheme, please email ddat@gov.wales to register for the above session.

If you are unable to attend any of these events but have any questions about the scheme and would like to speak to the team, please contact apprenticeshipscheme@gov.wales

CYTÛN AT THE SUMMER EVENTS

After 2 years of postponing the Urdd Eisteddfod, the Royal Welsh Show and the National Eisteddfod, it has now been confirmed that these three events will be happening as live events this year, with trade stands being allowed on the field. It will be three years since we last met and had a chance to socialize, and I'm sure you'll agree that it will be good to reconnect again, and have a chance for a cup of tea and a Welsh cake!

Meetings are being held as follows to discuss ideas / themes, what local activity can be included within the marquee and to seek volunteers to help:

- For the Urdd National Eisteddfod, Denbigh (May 30 - June 4) - meet at **7.00pm on Wednesday April 6th** at Capel y Dyffryn, Llandyrnog
- For the Royal Welsh Show (July 18-21) in Builth Wells - meets at **12.00 pm Monday April 4th** at the Christian Centre for Rural Wales (CCRW) on the Showground.
- For the National Eisteddfod, Tregaron (July 30 - August 6) - meet at 7.00pm on Monday April 4th at Bwlchgwynt Chapel, Tregaron

For further details please contact Aled Davies on 07894580192 or aleddavies@cytun.cymru

CONTACTING CYTÛN'S POLICY OFFICER



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 **@CytunNew**

Hapus i gyfathrebu yn Gymraeg ac yn Saesneg.

Happy to communicate in Welsh and English



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