
CYTŪN POLICY BULLETIN

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2023



TRAIDCRAFT CLOSES BUT THE BATTLE FOR FAIRER TRADE CONTINUES

On 21 January, the Board of Directors of Traidcraft plc issued a [statement](#) (abridged below) saying that the most familiar name in Fairtrade circles – and the key label on myriad Fairtrade stalls in churches across Wales – is to go into administration. They said:



It is with tremendous sadness that we announce that Traidcraft plc is going into administration.

The business has been in a weak financial position for some years and the Covid-19 pandemic presented a significant new set of challenges. Just as we were emerging from the pandemic, like many other retailers, we faced the combined effects of the war in Ukraine, rising energy prices, and increased transport costs.

Sadly, despite the heroic efforts of our team at Gateshead, low consumer confidence during the critical autumn trading period led to a sales result significantly short of what was required to sustain the operation. December sales were also negatively impacted by the uncertainty created by Royal Mail strikes....

It is heartbreaking to bring the Traidcraft plc story to an end in this manner but we can at least take some consolation from the knowledge that we have been a major force for good in the ethical retail sector for over forty years. We have championed the cause of trade justice to the point where we now have better standards and procedures in place to protect the rights and dignity of growers and producers all over the world.

We would like to offer our heartfelt thanks to all those who have journeyed with us as employees, board members, shareholders and suppliers. We would particularly like to thank our loyal band of "Fairtraders", many of whom have been with us since the very beginning.

The mission to combat trade injustice and poverty is far from complete. It is important to recognise that [Transform Trade](#) (previously Traidcraft Exchange, the charity arm of Traidcraft) will continue its vital work supporting producers and fighting for trade justice and people-centred trade. Our hope and prayer is that others will also emerge to pick up the torch that we have carried for four decades.

The Traidcraft website now provides a [page of links](#) for those who wish to order directly from the producers who previously supplied Traidcraft. Churches and individuals who wish to continue to campaign for fairer trade across the world are encouraged to link with [Fairtrade Wales](#). Do get involved in [Fairtrade Fortnight 2023](#) (27th February – 12th March).



Cytûn has been working with Fairtrade Wales and a number of other organisations who are committed to the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act's commitment to a globally responsible Wales, to seek to amend the [Social Partnership and Public Procurement Bill](#) currently before the Senedd. Our aim is to enshrine in law the Welsh Government's commitment to Wales as a Fairtrade Nation. So far, amendments to this effect have been narrowly rejected, but Welsh Government has committed to working with us to produce Statutory Guidance urging all public bodies who buy ('procure') goods to buy Fairtrade and to buy goods and services whose supply chains support decarbonisation, protecting biodiversity and human rights.

Fairtrade Wales has also convened [Trade Justice Wales](#), a short-term project to improve understanding of international trade in the context of the post-Brexit trade deals being negotiated by the UK Government. The final meeting of this network is on February 6, although it is hoped that this work too can be continued in other ways.

Modern Slavery, Human Trafficking and Exploitation: A Welsh Perspective

by Ali Ussery

Modern Slavery is a serious crime and violation of human rights that includes human trafficking, when a person is taken and held against their will, recruited and forced to work or commit crime, engage in sexual services, or in slavery in the workplace or domestic servitude.



There are over 50 million people around the world who are considered to be trapped as victims ([International Labour Organization](#)), but this is not a problem that exists in far flung places alone, for in the UK in 2021 there were 12,727 potential victims officially identified ([Home Office](#)), while many more have slipped through the system. The 2022 year-end figures are yet to be published, but this number is expected to have risen as the total for the first three quarters of the year was 12,530 referrals. The data include abuse against UK and overseas nationals, with the majority of cases for adults being 'labour exploitation', which includes work in factories, hospitality, tourism, the care system, services such as cleaning and car washes etc. while for children the highest proportion is for 'criminal exploitation' which mainly involves the transport and sale of drugs through what has become known as 'county lines'. National Referral Mechanism data are available online where national figures, referrals by police force area, exploitation type, age, gender, nationality etc. are published (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-referral-mechanism-and-duty-to-notify-statistics-uk-july-to-september-2022/modern-slavery-national-referral-mechanism-and-duty-to-notify-statistics-uk-quarter-3-2022-july-to-september>).

Modern Slavery is a tragic and growing reality in our communities today. In Wales, the [Anti-Slavery Leadership Group](#) is a Welsh Government led structure that brings together statutory and third sector agencies. This forum is currently developing a new strategy which will include the collaboration of four working groups, 'Training and Awareness', 'Prevention', 'Victims and Survivors Group', and the 'Ethical Wales and International Group'. Churches are represented on the Forum by Ali Ussery, who reports back through Cytûn.

It is so important that church communities and people of faith engage with this issue as one of the most serious crimes against humanity in our modern times. It is not good enough to simply acknowledge that this abuse happens in all its complex ways, and we are powerless to do anything to make a difference, when we, as believers in a loving and compassionate God are talking about human beings who are made in His image, and all people have the right to live a life of freedom. The challenge is how to move forward. So much of the official dialogue is about spotting the signs of exploitation, how to report concerns, supporting victims and survivors, and then bringing perpetrators to justice. If we are serious, we have to look upstream and work harder on prevention, prayer, advocacy and changing the moral compass so that abuse is stopped before it happens.

There are many charities who have been working to tackle exploitation over the past decade and more throughout the UK. **Haven of Light** is a North Wales based organisation which works closely with the Church in Wales and the European Evangelical Alliance's European Freedom Network (www.havenoflight.co.uk). For information please contact info@havenoflight.uk

Picture courtesy of Haven of Light

Digital Inclusion Alliance Wales

by Rev. Aled Davies, Sunday Schools Council for Wales

Cymunedau
Digidol
Cymru
Hyder Digidol,
Iechyd a Lles

Digital
Communities
Wales
Digital Confidence,
Health and Well-being

Darparwyd gan
Delivered by
ewmpas



For 3 years now, I have been representing Cytûn on the Network of [Digital Inclusion Alliance Wales](#), which meets via Zoom and is chaired by the Minister for Social Justice, Jane Hutt. It is a group of between 80 and 100 representatives, representing the private and business sector, and includes the County Councils from across Wales. It is good that there is also a place for the churches of Wales in this network.

The purpose of the group is to try to ensure that everyone in Wales has access to the web and to a broadband service, and the ability to access suitable equipment in order to be part of the digital world in which we live. The alliance is pressing the Government hard to ensure that every community in Wales has access to fibre optic broadband, in order to support small businesses and all those who now work from home.

A prominent concern is the 'digital poverty' in which many children find themselves. We are used to hearing of poverty in terms of household finances, which leads to a lack of suitable clothes and a lack of food for many. But in the same way digital poverty – that is, people (and children) who don't have reliable and consistent access to the web - is another worry. With so much educational homework now being tasks to be carried out online, children in those households that only have one computer, or none at all, are put at a great disadvantage. Many may have to do their homework on a small device such as a mobile phone, and have to go out of the house to find an internet connection. A number of schemes are underway to provide tools and access to the web for families who are struggling. In the same way vulnerable adults will find it difficult to access services, with the need to register and order services increasingly going online.

Communities are encouraged to establish centres where people can turn to in order to gain access to the digital world, and that is one area where WE as churches can help. If there is internet in the chapel, why not install a community computer there? - an opportunity for children to come there to do their homework, or a meeting place to help the elderly carry out tasks online. This also fits in with the idea of creating [warm spaces](#), where someone who finds it difficult to heat their houses can have a warm place to meet.

FAREWELL FOR THE FIRST FUTURE GENERATIONS COMMISSIONER



On January 24 at the Millennium Centre, Cardiff, Sophie Howe (left) held her last formal event as the first Future Generations Commissioner in Wales (and the World!). There was an opportunity to hear from eight local organizations that have used the [Well-Being of Future Generations Act](#) to drive change in terms of flood prevention, donating surplus hospital beds to families in need, greening the Health Service, promoting the voice of young people, and more. We also heard about the similar steps being taken in Scotland, and enjoyed special poems and music. After an address from the First Minister of Wales, at the end of the day, the reins were handed over to the new Commissioner, Derek Walker.

During the day a list was published of [100 Changemakers](#) in Wales, whose work in the spirit of the Act Sophie wished to recognise. Among these was Cytûn Policy Officer, Revd Gethin Rhys. Gethin said, "I'm not usually one for honours, but I really appreciate this recognition of the value of faith having a voice in the public square in Wales."

EVENTS IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH

ECO CHURCH
AN A ROCHA UK PROJECT

Ecumenical 'Eco Church' Sessions

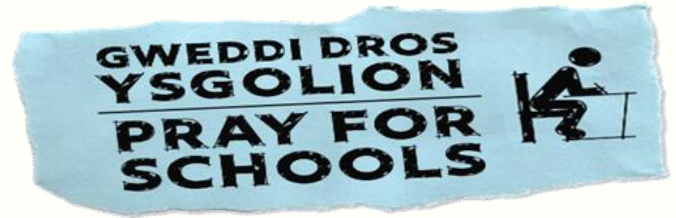
Capel y Porth, Porthmadog.
Thurs, 2nd February, 3pm
OR
St John's Methodist Church, Bangor
Friday, 3rd February, 10.30am

A chance to explore, ask questions, chat, and learn more about how to better care for creation as chapels and churches by hearing from those already taking action.



Welcome to all!  Bilingual sessions

A Rocha UK is a charity registered in England and Wales (1089276) and a company limited by guarantee (4210020)



The vision of Pray for School is to mobilise Christians to support their school communities through prayer. All over the UK, groups of parents, teachers or schools' workers meet on a regular basis to pray for their local schools.

Bring a friend along for an inspiring 45 minutes to pray together on **Wednesday 8th Feb at 7pm**. This event is part of Love our Schools fortnight and resources can be found at <https://www.prayforschools.org/loveourschools/>

For further information contact Andy Hughes wales@prayforschools.org

Pray about the Climate Crisis

Christian Climate Action Cymru is holding a series of silent prayer vigils about the crisis in front of the UK Government building in Wood Street, Cardiff during March. People of all faiths and backgrounds are invited to join. More details can be found [here](#).

KEEPING WARM THIS WINTER



We're experiencing a cost-of-living crisis, an energy crisis, and a climate emergency, all fuelled by our dependence on expensive oil and gas. They all share the same solutions. Investing in cheaper renewable energy and home insulation will make heating our homes more affordable, ease pressure on our pockets, and reduce climate-wrecking emissions.

Climate Cymru, of which Cytûn is a member, is calling on the Welsh Government to provide emergency support for vulnerable households; implement an ambitious energy efficiency programme; rapidly scale up low-cost renewables; and free us from fossil fuels. Sign the petition here: <https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/tell-welsh-government-to-take-urgent-action-to-keep-people-warm-this-winter>

Carers' Summit 2023 – Together we can get things done

Carers Wales invite unpaid carers to join this year's online Carers Summit and have a say on a variety of issues. This is a real opportunity for you to get involved and have your say. Together we can and do get things done.

Following on from last year's Summit the Ombudsman is considering initiating an investigation, the Chief Social Care Officer for Wales is looking at how direct payments are promoted and managed as well as undertaking a review of the carer assessment process.

Carers should register via Eventbrite [here](#).

Report on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Wales

Cytûn was one of over 70 organisations who contributed evidence to an important [report](#) by [JustFair](#) on what they describe as “the dire state of our everyday rights” – such as rights to food, housing, health, education, social security and work in the UK. These are enshrined in the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), to which the UK is a signatory, but these rights are not incorporated explicitly into domestic law. The report feeds into the United Nations’ own review of how Wales and the UK are implementing these rights to which they have signed up. Cytûn contributed comments on the right to manifest religion and belief in Wales, and we are quoted in the report.



A launch event was held in the Pierhead Building in Cardiff Bay on January 19, with speakers (pictured) including Revd Ruth Coombs of the Equality and Human Rights Commission; Jess McQuail, Director of Just Fair; Sioned Williams MS; Sean O’Neill of Children in Wales; and Allison Hulmes of Romany, Gypsies & Travellers Wales.

CYTÛN AND NATIONAL EVENTS IN WALES 2023

Cytûn was privileged to be able to contribute to the success of three national events - the Urdd National Eisteddfod, the Royal Welsh Show and the National Eisteddfod - during 2022, and several thousand people visited the stands in Denbigh, Llanellwedd and Tregaron. Thank you for all the support and cooperation received from our partners and the volunteers over the 3 events. We hope to build on this momentum again this year, visiting Llandovery in Carmarthenshire for the Urdd Eisteddfod, The Royal Welsh Show in Llanellwedd and the National Eisteddfod in Boduan near Pwllheli in August.

We will begin making local arrangements soon, calling volunteers together to create rotas and plan for the activities etc. - see below. It would be good to hear about any ideas / possible themes for 2023. Is there a special event / celebration that you would like to include on our program of activities, or to secure space within the tent for a special exhibition / campaign? The space has already been secured for the 3 events, based on the size of the tents in previous years, and so we look forward over the coming months to create units that will be welcoming and appealing. A service is held at 11.00 every morning and events in the afternoon at 2.00. Volunteers will also be needed on the stand to welcome and carry out activities not to mention a large rota of people to be responsible for the tea and the kitchen.

The following **meetings** will be held to discuss activities within the tent.

Urdd Eisteddfod, Carmarthenshire May 29 - June 3 2023: 7.00 p.m. Monday evening March 6th in Providence Chapel, Llangadog. It will be good to be able to include within the stand as many exhibits as possible showing the work of local Sunday Schools, children’s clubs, etc.

Royal Welsh Show, Llanellwedd, July 24-27 2023: 1.00pm Monday March 6th 2023 at the CCRW Centre on the Showground. Tea and coffee provided - bring your own lunch.

Llyn ac Eifionydd National Eisteddfod, Boduan near Pwllheli, August 5-12 2023: 7.00 Tuesday evening, March 7th in the vestry of Penlan Chapel, Pwllheli town centre. We will also discuss the arrangements for the service on the opening Sunday morning of the eisteddfod.

For further details contact Aled Davies, Cytûn 2023 National Events Organizer, on 07894 580192 or aled@ysgolsul.com

POLICY BRIEFS

Energy bill support for places of worship

The UK Government has published its scheme to assist non-domestic customers – including places of worship – with their energy bills from April 2023 – March 2024. The announcement can be seen here - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/energy-bills-discount-scheme>

For most customers, a discount on the price per unit will be applied automatically via energy bills. Details of the discount are shown on the above linked page, and energy providers should provide confirmation to all customers before the end of March 2023. There are some conditions relating to the kind of contract which the customer has with the supplier. In most cases, this will mean a rise in the unit cost of energy from April 2023 compared to what is being paid now, but it will still be below the market price.

A small number of places of worship will qualify for an additional reduction through the ETTI (Energy and Trade Intensive Industries) scheme. This will apply to places of worship which are a historic site or building or a tourist attraction; or which house a library, archive or museum. They will need to apply for this additional support. The application process has not yet been published.

Unfortunately, Cytûn does not have the resources to advise individual places of worship on their situation – you need to contact your energy supplier – but we are glad that the case we made to UK Government, with the help of information supplied by a number of local churches, has produced some results.

Decarbonising the Welsh economy

Cytûn attended a fascinating and stimulating day arranged by the Wales Centre for Public Policy about the challenges of decarbonising the Welsh economy, held on 18th January 2023. The livestream of the event and recordings from the parallel sessions are now available on WCPP's YouTube channel - <https://bit.ly/WCPPDecarbEventPlaylist> Cytûn especially recommends the summing-up session led by Dr Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Wales. Dr Williams's contribution begins at 5hrs 49mins. He compared our failure to decarbonise to the difficulty of breaking an addiction – we are addicted to carbon-fuelled growth. He believed that part of breaking the addiction is to engage in imaginative envisioning of a better future.

Public commemoration in Wales

Following recent controversies about statues and memorials, including some in churches, street names and the like, Welsh Government (through Cadw) has decided to develop guidance on public commemoration in Wales. A [public consultation](#) will run until 21st February. Cadw is keen that churches and other faith communities should respond. Cytûn will welcome contributions to our response by 14th February (email gethin@cytun.cymru), and encourages member churches and organisations also to make their own contributions to the debate.

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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We apologise that it was not possible to publish the December/January Bulletin.