
CYTŪN POLICY BULLETIN

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2023



COVID COMMEMORATION SUNDAY?

During September, the [final report of the UK Commission on Covid Commemoration](#) was published. Of particular interest to churches will be the first recommendation, that a *UK-wide day of reflection should be established and held annually on the first Sunday of March*. The reason given for choosing a Sunday is that fewer people are at work that day, and are therefore available for reflection and remembering. The report acknowledges that this day will sometimes coincide with St David's Day or Mothering Sunday, and recommends that the Covid Commemoration Trust, which it recommends should be established, should be able to decide to change the commemoration date to avoid any clash.

Other recommendations include *that approximately 10 green spaces are identified across the UK and that a new memorial is established at each location as a quiet space of reflection where people can gather*. The Welsh Government is already establishing three memorial woodlands in Wales, on the Erddig Estate, Wrexham; in the Tywi Valley; and in Cwmfelinfach, Caerphilly. Ifor ap Glyn's powerful poem, *Tree Sensibility*, marking the start of the planting of the woodlands, can be seen [here](#).



It is also recommended that funding should be provided for local memorials, a website, oral histories and exhibitions in museums, and research to prepare for future risks. It also calls for ensuring that the history of the pandemic is taught in schools and colleges.

Cytûn and the Interfaith Council of Wales participated in the Commission's work, and many of its recommendations reflect our input. The governments have not yet responded to the recommendations.

Meanwhile, the [UK Covid-19 Inquiry](#), chaired by Baroness Hallett, continues its work. The [Module 2 hearings](#), about the UK Government's main decisions and their effects, will begin taking public oral evidence on October 3. The [Module 2B](#) hearings, about the Welsh Government's decisions and their effects, will follow in February/March 2024. Cytûn and the Interfaith Council of Wales are co-ordinating a submission by churches and other faith groups for Module 2B. Any denomination or network, local church or other faith group that wants to contribute to this presentation should send input to gethin@cytun.cymru **as soon as possible**, so that it can be prepared in good time for the Inquiry.

Meanwhile, Covid-19 continues to circulate in Wales. The latest variant identified is BA.2.86. The UK Health Security Agency has published the [latest information](#) about it. They say that the early evidence suggests that the latest variant is no more likely to cause serious illness than the previous ones, and that the vaccines are effective against it. It appears that lateral flow tests still work correctly with this new variant.

The Welsh Government has updated its [guidance](#) on hygiene, ventilation and other appropriate safety measures, and churches are encouraged to continue to take the steps recommended in it when organizing their activities, especially as winter approaches. Following these steps will also help to keep attendees safe from other winter infectious diseases. The [winter vaccination programme](#) is already in place in Wales for those who are eligible.

Picture: [PICRYL](#). Public Domain.

ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

A week before the UK Prime Minister expressed concern about the impact of climate action on ordinary people, and [changed some policies](#) as a result, the Welsh Government called for a decade of action to tackle the climate crisis and achieve net zero by 2050.

The Welsh Government's campaign, [Climate Action Wales](#), aims to help people understand what steps they can take to make long-term positive changes. The website has information about climate change, the steps people can take, and the help available.

The basic message of the campaign is: There are more than three million of us in Wales. No one can do everything to tackle climate change, but everyone can do something.



Churches are already part of acting on the climate in Wales:

- Cytûn is part of the broad [Climate Cymru](#) coalition, which participated in the conversation with the Welsh Government about establishing Climate Action Wales.
- The [EcoChurch](#) scheme, led by Cytûn member ARocha UK, encourages local churches to register and seek awards for their efforts to tackle the climate and nature crises within their local buildings, land and neighbourhood.
- At the meeting of the Governing Body of the Church in Wales in September, the Archbishop of Wales announced that he will [convene an all-Wales climate summit](#) in autumn 2024.

Regarding the UK Government's announcement, some of Cytûn's member churches responded strongly. In a [joint statement](#), leaders of the Methodist Church, United Reformed Church and Baptist Union of Great Britain said *We are dismayed that the Prime Minister is delaying the implementation of policies to achieve net zero. ... At a time when so many people are struggling financially, the government has a crucial role to play in ensuring the cost of transition to net zero does not fall most heavily on those least able to afford it. Delaying measures to insulate homes will have the opposite effect, and slowing efforts to reduce fossil fuel use will increase climate impacts on vulnerable communities around the globe....*

The commitments made at COP26 were instrumental in providing confidence to industry, investors and civil society that the UK was serious about rising to the climate challenge. It is a source of extreme disappointment that the Prime Minister's announcement will damage that confidence and undermine our collective efforts. As a country, we have moral and legal responsibilities to show leadership in tackling the climate emergency together.

Jennifer Larbie, Head of UK Advocacy and Campaigns at Cytûn member organisation Christian Aid, said: *Deadlines spur action and pushing them back will see the UK heap further pain on people suffering from devastating drought in East Africa or killer storms in the Pacific. The UK has the 8th largest historical emissions in the world, that means, as a country, we have contributed more to the climate crisis than most. By undermining our climate commitments Sunak is showing a woeful disregard for the world's most vulnerable people. It's utterly reckless.*

- The Catholic Church has [announced](#) that Pope Francis will publish the second part of his encyclical *Laudato Si'* about Christian responsibility towards God's creation at the end of the Season of Creation 2023, October 4.

Windrush cymru @75

Britain called, and they answered...



Join us for an unforgettable cinematic experience

A documentary funded by the Welsh Government



Tickets are now available for the premiere screening of a documentary film funded by the Welsh Government to mark the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the first of the 'Windrush generation' to the British isles [here](#). The film will be shown at Cineworld Cardiff on Saturday October 7 at 1.30pm. Tickets are £5.

A host of other activities follow during Black History Month, and the details can be seen on the [Race Council Cymru](#) website.

CHAPLAINCY IN PRISONS

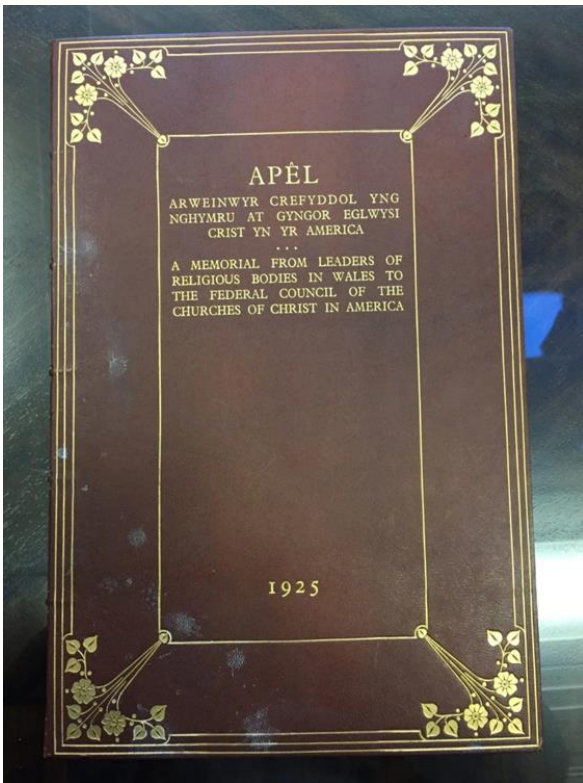


The Ven. James Ridge, The Chaplain General His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service gave a talk at the International Prison Chaplains' Conference (Europe) in Llandudno in June. He explored the history and practice of Prison Chaplaincy in England and Wales. It was recorded and is now available online via [YouTube](#).

SPIRITUAL CARE IN THE HEALTH SERVICE

In August, NHS England published new [guidelines for NHS managers on pastoral, spiritual and religious care](#). While these guidelines do not apply in Wales, they will be amongst the materials to be taken into account in NHS Wales's own review of its equivalent guidelines. This review is being carried out through SHaW (Spiritual Health and Well-Being in NHS and Social Care Wales), on which Cytûn and some other faith groups are represented, together with health care chaplains in Wales, St Padarn's Institute's Chaplaincy course, and other relevant public and third sector bodies. Consultation with churches and other faith groups will follow once the relevant guidance from England, Scotland and elsewhere has been collated and studied.

CENTENARY OF CHURCHES' INNOVATIVE APPEAL FOR PEACE



In 1923-4, women from Wales set out to collect almost 400,000 signatures appealing to the Government of the United States of America to join the League of Nations. The centenary celebrations of that remarkable project are already underway, and you can read more [here](#).

Many of the women belonged to chapels or churches, and many local branches of the League of Nations Union met in places of worship. Following the transporting of the petition to the USA in 1924, the leaders of some of the Christian denominations in Wales - all male - decided that they should add their voice to the call. There was correspondence between them and the wording of a similar appeal was agreed, to be delivered to the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in the USA - now the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, a sister organisation to Cytûn.

As there was no equivalent ecumenical body in Wales at the time (only the non-conformist chapels belonged to the Free Church Council of Wales), this decision to draw up an appeal across the Protestant Christian denominations was innovative. The appeal was signed by two of the bishops of the Church in Wales - just five years after it was disaffiliated, and only eight years after it had been supporting the British war effort in the First World War as part of the Church of England. They co-signed with the Society of Friends (the Quakers), which had opposed the war with most of its members refusing to serve in the armed forces.

The correspondence between the leaders who gave rise to the appeal is available in the Temple of Peace in Cardiff and in the National Library in Aberystwyth. The Welsh Centre for International Affairs (WCIA), which is responsible for the Temple of Peace, is keen to work together with the successors of the denominations that signed the Appeal, and with all churches and organisations in Cytûn, to further investigate the history and then celebrate in 2025. It will be an important centenary for both the peace movement and the ecumenical movement alike.

1925 was not the end of the story. There was a peace petition from workers in 1928, and then a further petition from the churches, calling for disarmament, in 1931. You can read more and watch a video with Cytûn's Policy Officer outlining the history and its current relevance [here](#).

Picture: Welsh Centre for International Affairs

Launch of New Chaplaincy Service in Senedd

Wednesday 4th October will see the launch of the new Chaplaincy Service in the Senedd. The new Chaplaincy arrangements are the first of their kind in a national parliament and are progressive, gender-inclusive and representative of the faiths and beliefs of people working at the Senedd.

Members of the new chaplaincy team are: The Revd Dr Stephen Adams (Christian), Dr Laura Jones (Muslim) and Mari Vaughan-Owen (Humanist). They will be able to access support from other faiths and beliefs when appropriate.

The team will be available to offer pastoral care and support to Members of the Senedd, their support staff and Senedd Commission staff. The launch of the Chaplaincy Service is the result of significant work by the Senedd Cross-Party Group on Faith - which Cytûn and many of our member churches and organisations regularly attend - in partnership with the Llywydd and the Senedd Commission.

HOMELESSNESS SUNDAY, 8 OCTOBER 2023

Cytûn's member organisation, Housing Justice Cymru, arranges an annual Homelessness Sunday. A wide range of resources for the Sunday can be found [here](#). It can be held on Sunday October 8, or any other Sunday that is appropriate for the local church.

This year, one of the prayers was written by Cytûn's Policy Officer, Revd Gethin Rhys:

Merciful God,
your son Jesus Christ said
"Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests,
but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." [Matthew 8.20, NRSV]
So you know what it's like to live as a wanderer not knowing where you'll sleep tonight,
and you walk alongside all those who live without permanent refuge,
sheltering at the mercy of friends, in temporary accommodation, or on the streets.
In your mercy, therefore, bless the work of Housing Justice Cymru
and everyone who volunteers to host a refugee,
to support people through Citadel in their first stable home,
to feed the hungry or care for the sick.
Strengthen the churches of Wales to respond to the needs of our neighbours
and to do so free of judgment or reproach,
but imitating your desire to understand, to bless and to strengthen.
And be with Housing Justice's paid staff and trustees as they resource this work
and with everyone in the Welsh Government and local authorities who work in this field.
In the name of Jesus we ask it, Amen.

A video of the prayer can be viewed [here](#), or in Welsh [here](#).

REFORMING THE SENEDD AND ELECTIONS IN WALES

The Welsh Government has introduced the first of three Bills to reform the Senedd and elections in Wales. The [Senedd Cymru \(Members and Elections\) Bill](#), if passed by the Senedd, would increase the size of the Senedd from 2026 onwards to 96 members. The next election in 2026 would be held through a proportional representation system with closed lists. This is the system currently used for the regional seats in the Senedd, and was used for elections to the European Parliament until the UK left in 2020. According to this system, each voter would have one vote only, for one party list. Voters would not be able to choose between the names on the list, and they could not vote for or against an individual candidate based on that individual's moral beliefs or personal qualities. The only exception would be in the case of independent candidates, who could present themselves for election on a list with only a single name on it.

According to the Bill, during the seventh Senedd (2026-30), the Senedd would be expected to consider a plan to allow Members of the Senedd to share the role, and also review the new arrangements. It would allow the size of the Welsh Government to increase to 17 ministers, with the possibility of further expansion in the future, and allow the election of an additional Deputy Llywydd by the Senedd. The Senedd's term, currently five years, would be shortened to four years – reverting to the pattern which applied until 2011. A Senedd committee is holding a [consultation on the Bill](#) until November 3.

During 2024-5 two additional Bills will be introduced in the same area:

- On October 3, the Elections and Elected Bodies (Wales) Bill will be introduced, which will change some of the mechanics of all devolved elections (for the Senedd and local government) by making it easier to register to vote and vote by post, improve the accessibility of polling stations, and consolidate the patchwork of laws relating to these areas.
- A Gender Quotas Bill, which would oblige the lists of candidates for the Senedd to include male and female candidates alternately, in order to try to ensure a gender balance in the Senedd.

POLICY BRIEFS

Parish Nursing in Wales

Cytûn member organisation Parish Nursing UK is holding an Explore Online session for Wales on 1st November at 10am or 7pm for anyone interested in finding out more about Parish Nursing and what impact it is having in communities across the UK. We hope it will be a great platform for information gathering and sharing with churches across Wales about the challenges faced in churches and communities and how Parish Nursing could fit within the local context.

These hour-long sessions are free of charge. To book, contact enquiries@parishnursing.org.uk. To read more about parish nursing go to www.parishnursing.org.uk

A Conversation with the Public about Health and Social Care

In light of the challenges faced in the Welsh health and social care sector, the [Bevan Commission](#) are hosting a series of public conversations in each Welsh Health Board's locality, supported by NHS Health Boards and Trusts and [Llais](#), the new citizen's voice body for health and social care in Wales. There will also be an online meeting. During these events, there will be opportunity to talk through the challenges that the health and social care sector is facing, and discuss how things could be improved and sustained in the future.

Everyone is welcome to this informal and interactive event, including those who work in health and social care. Refreshments will be provided. See a full schedule with links to booking and more info at <https://www.bevancommission.org/programmes/a-conversation-with-the-public/>

Migration in Europe

With migration becoming an ever more salient and toxic subject of public debate, Cytûn's Wales & Europe Working Group is in conversation with the [Churches' Commission on Migrants in Europe](#) (CCME), an ecumenical body established in 1964 to support the work of churches across Europe in supporting migrants and speaking to those in power about migration policy. Much of the work of the Commission focuses on migration policy in the European Union, for example in issuing during September a [statement](#) on the migration agreement reached between the EU and Tunisia.

With the UK's migration policy now independent of that of the EU, and with Wales aspiring to be a Nation of Sanctuary (see <https://sanctuary.gov.wales/>), Cytûn believes that churches in Wales have an important contribution to make to these debates not only in the UK but across Europe. We hope to help CCME engage with UK migration policy and its effects elsewhere in Europe.

Public meeting: 'Assisted Suicide: What does a compassionate response look like?'

Speaker: Baroness Finlay of Llandaff, member of the House of Lords, Hon. Professor of Palliative Medicine, Cardiff University. **Wednesday 15th November 2023**, 12-1.30pm, Conference Room C & D, Tŷ Hywel, Senedd Cymru. Lunch provided. Sponsored by Darren Millar MS.

RSVP: Rupert Evans (Public Affairs Manager, Right to Life UK) Rupert@righttolife.org.uk

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Hapus i gyfathrebu yn Gymraeg ac yn Saesneg.

Happy to communicate in Welsh and English



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