
CYTŪN POLICY BULLETIN

AUGUST 2018



TACKLING THE ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGE

Christian churches believe that this world is God's creation, and that 'environmental' matters are therefore also theological and moral issues – our interactions with the environment are an important part of our interaction with God.

With the growth in concern about issues such as plastic pollution spurred by David Attenborough's series, [Blue Planet II](#), and European laws which protect the environment being transferred into UK and Welsh law due to Brexit (see page 4), it is not surprising that churches are rising afresh to the challenge.

The Church in Wales has the [CHASE](#) working group to monitor these matters. The Union of Welsh Independents is in the process of updating their pioneering environmental pack



originally launched in 1992. And the [Environmental Issues Network of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland](#) brings together all the churches and Christian environmental agencies to share resources, pray and act.

The June 2018 meeting of the Network was held in St Mary's Church, Butetown, jointly with CHASE, and heard a lively and fascinating presentation by Terri Thomas from

Welsh Government about Welsh environmental policy, especially in the light of the [Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016](#) and the [Well-Being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#). The representatives from the other UK nations were glad to hear some of Wales's forward thinking ideas and keen to take the message back to their own nations. This meeting was a natural sequel to a meeting with Tim Leunig, senior advisor to the UK Secretary of State for Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs, in March 2018. Both meetings have informed the response by the Cytûn Wales & Europe Working Party to Mr Gove's department's consultation on [Environmental Principles and Governance](#).

Cytûn represents its member churches and organisations in many meetings about the environment, such as the [Institute of Welsh Affairs conference](#) in June 2018, when the Environment Minister for Wales, Hannah Blythyn AM (pictured), gave an address on Welsh Government steps towards a plastic-free Wales.



In September, there will be opportunity to pray and act on the environment in the Season of Creation, when harvest services are held in many of our churches. There is a [selection of resources](#) on the website of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. Last year [bilingual resources](#) were produced by the Diocese of Bangor of the Church in Wales.

GOD'S BLESSING FOR THE NHS



On 5th July 2018 we celebrated the 70th anniversary of the National Health Service, brainchild of the Welsh MP Aneurin Bevan.

Amongst the many celebrations was one led by St David's Uniting Church, Pontypridd, who organised a walk from north to south Wales, calling in at health facilities along the way to thank the staff for their commitment and promising to continue praying for them. The pictures above show the walkers visiting Oswestry Health Centre and Brecon War Memorial Hospital.



Thank you cards were also filled in along the route, and presented to the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Vaughan Gething AM, on the steps of the Senedd on July 17, accompanied by the [Tenovus Choir](#), local school children and members of the public.

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES IN RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS

One aspect of God Bless the NHS (see above) was the knitting of thank you gifts for Health Service workers by the craft group at Castle Square Church in Trefforest. This is an example of the kind of activity which we know happens in churches and chapels and other religious buildings across Wales.



Voluntary Arts Wales
Celfyddydau Gwirfoddol Cymru

place across Wales - and we know that a lot of activity takes place within religious buildings such as church halls.

Voluntary Arts Wales is a charity that promotes participation in creative cultural activities, who are researching the breadth and diversity of the informal, everyday creative activities that take

place across Wales - and we know that a lot of activity takes place within religious buildings such as church halls. They would be very grateful if you could complete this short survey at: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/SCWDZK3>, so that we can highlight the creative activities that exist within communities across Wales. The questionnaire is supported by Cytûn, and we are keen that as many churches as possible take the opportunity to fill it in.

BREXIT – THE LATEST

Based on a presentation by Gethin Rhys, Cytûn Policy Officer, in [Gŵyl Coda Festival](#), Dôl Llys, Llanidloes, 29 July 2018.

For two years, the Welsh churches, working through [Cytûn's Wales and Europe Working Party](#), have been doing their utmost to rise to the challenges of leaving the European Union from a Christian standpoint. Our priority has not been exploring the complexities of the Customs Union and the Single Market, nor following the twists and turns of the internal discussions in the UK nor the negotiations between the UK Government and the European Union – there is plenty of commentary available on these elsewhere.



We have concentrated on a number of issues of particular interest and concern to our member churches, and here is a brief summary of where we have reached at the end of July 2018.

1. The Irish border

We are in regular conversation with churches in Ireland regarding their concerns at the possible effect of closing or ‘hardening’ the border between the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland. Recent press reports have said that the UK Prime Minister, Mrs Theresa May, is “obsessed” with the subject. If so, we welcome that, as keeping the peace in Ireland is a priority for us and for our brothers and sisters there. As Cytûn noted when the [Interim Agreement between the UK and the EU](#) was published in December 2017, keeping the border fully open will entail an element of alignment between the customs and trade arrangements of the UK with those of the EU, and that is what the UK offered in its [White Paper](#) of July 2018. We continue to pray with our fellow Christians in Ireland for a solution which will meet their deep desire for peace and continuing co-operation across their island.

2. Human rights

Cytûn has called for the retention of as much as possible of the [Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union](#) in UK law after we leave the EU. Amendments to that effect were defeated during debates on the [European Union \(Withdrawal\) Act](#) in Westminster, so it appears that individuals will no longer be able to seek legal redress in this way for wrongs suffered through Government administration of returning EU law after we leave.

But this does not mean a total loss of human rights. The [European Convention on Human Rights](#) (incorporated in UK law by the [Human Rights Act 1998](#)) remains in force. The Convention is administered by the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights, institutions which are entirely separate from the EU, and which include all European countries other than Belarus. We are delighted to see an unconditional commitment to continuation of this arrangement in the UK in the [White Paper](#), which ameliorates some of the concerns caused by commitments to change these arrangements in the Conservative Party manifestos of 2010 and 2015, and a commitment in the 2017 manifesto to remain in the Convention only during the current Parliament.

3. EU citizens in Wales and UK citizens in the EU

Our churches include a significant number of members who are European Union citizens, some having lived here for decades, and we are deeply aware of their concerns for the future. We are glad that the UK Government has offered a new [settled status](#) to EU

citizens who live here already and their families, and has published details of the proposed scheme. But concern remains as there is no certainty that this new status will be introduced if there is no comprehensive agreement between the UK and EU. The Secretary of State for Exiting the EU, Dominic Raab MP, said in [the House of Commons on July 24](#), “We are very clear that, in the event of no deal, there would be no wholesale removal of rights of EU nationals in this country.” The meaning of ‘wholesale’ in this context is unclear. The campaign movement [the3million](#) is concerned about this and a number of details of the scheme which remain unclear.

We are glad also that the Welsh Government offers [access to the Welsh NHS](#) on the basis of residence (rather than immigration status) and that the European Union (Withdrawal) Act confirms EU citizens’ rights to vote.

The [Church of England Diocese in Europe](#) is working on behalf of all churches to seek clarity regarding UK citizens who live in continental Europe. Most EU nations have yet to release details of how they will proceed after the UK’s exit.

4. Implementing the Withdrawal Act

The [European Union \(Withdrawal\) Act 2018](#) is now operational, and in the light of the [Inter-Governmental Agreement between the UK and Welsh Governments](#), it will be under that Act that EU law will be transferred into UK and Welsh law. This process has already started with the UK Government beginning to publish the draft ‘Statutory instruments’ on its website: <https://www.gov.uk/eu-withdrawal-act-2018-statutory-instruments>.



Already there are instances of the law being changed rather than simply transferred. For example, if there is no final agreement with the EU, the Government intends to lay the [Return of Cultural Objects \(Revocation\) Regulations 2018](#) to revoke its obligation



within the EU to seek to return historical artefacts taken illegally from other countries. The most famous UK/EU example is the “Elgin marbles” in the British Museum, stolen from the Parthenon in Greece. It is intended that this change will cover the whole UK, including Wales, even though culture, museums, etc are devolved to Wales.

5. Devolution and Brexit legislation

We frequently remind the UK Government of the need to respect not only the 2016 referendum but also the 2011 referendum, when the people of Wales voted ‘Yes’ to the question:

Do you want the Assembly now to be able to make laws on all matters in the 20 subject areas it has powers for? with the following commentary on the ballot paper: *If most voters vote ‘yes’ - the Assembly will be able to make laws on all matters in the 20 subject areas it has powers for, without needing the UK Parliament’s agreement.*

It is clear that implementing this commitment cannot be fully consistent with losing the common legal framework provided by EU law in many devolved areas, and there is still need for detailed scrutiny from this standpoint of other Brexit legislation passing through Parliament, such as [the Trade Bill](#).

Cytûn’s Wales & Europe Working Party will continue to follow these matters on behalf of our member churches and Christian organisations in Wales, and arrange local opportunities for people to discuss these matters in an open and friendly atmosphere. Contact gethin@cytun.cymru if you would like to host a meeting or know more.

BARRIERS AND INCENTIVES TO STANDING FOR ELECTION TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

In December 2017 an [Expert Panel](#) established by the Llywydd (Presiding Officer) of the National Assembly reported on the arrangements for electing Assembly Members. Amongst the recommendations was taking steps to increase diversity amongst candidates by allowing job sharing and ensuring equality between women and men. At the end of the current Assembly term, the Assembly Commission, chaired by the Llywydd, Elin Jones AM, [announced](#) that it would not proceed with these recommendations for the moment, although it will proceed to introduce votes at 16 for Assembly elections and to change the name of the Assembly to the Welsh Parliament.

In August 2017, readers of this Bulletin were given the opportunity to contribute to research by Huw Pritchard of the Wales Governance Centre, Cardiff University, into the barriers and incentives facing people considering (or choosing not to consider) standing for election. Huw is grateful to all who responded, and you can read his report entitled [Unpacking Diversity](#) here, and read a [Summary](#) here.

CARERS WORRIED ABOUT THE FUTURE

During Carers Week 2018, new research was published entitled “Supporting carers to be healthy and connected” based upon the 514 responses to the State of Caring 2018 survey by [Carers Wales](#).

- Over half of carers in Wales said they expect their physical (55%) and mental (57%) health and well-being to get worse in the next two years.
- Over two in five (45%) carers said that they expect to be able to provide less care or no care in the future because of poor physical health.
- Over one third of carers (37%) felt that poor mental health would mean they will be able to provide less or no care in the future.

Carers most worried about the impact of stress and anxiety on their own health as a result of caring. Carers named the main stressors as not getting enough sleep, providing hands on care for the person they care for, and filling in forms for financial or practical support for themselves or the person they care for.

Claire Morgan, on behalf of Carers Week, said: “This new research is a stark reminder that the enormous contribution made by Wales’s 370,000 unpaid carers. They must not be taken for granted. Without the unpaid care provided every year by family and friends, our health and care services would collapse. Yet the physical and mental strain of caring, without enough support, is jeopardising carers’ ability to care in the future. Caring for a loved one all too often means that carers neglect their own mental and physical health. Finding the time and space to be healthy, get enough sleep and maintain relationships with others are all huge challenges identified by carers. Being left unprepared for carrying out care tasks and battling with a complex health, benefits and social care system are piling yet more stress on to carers.

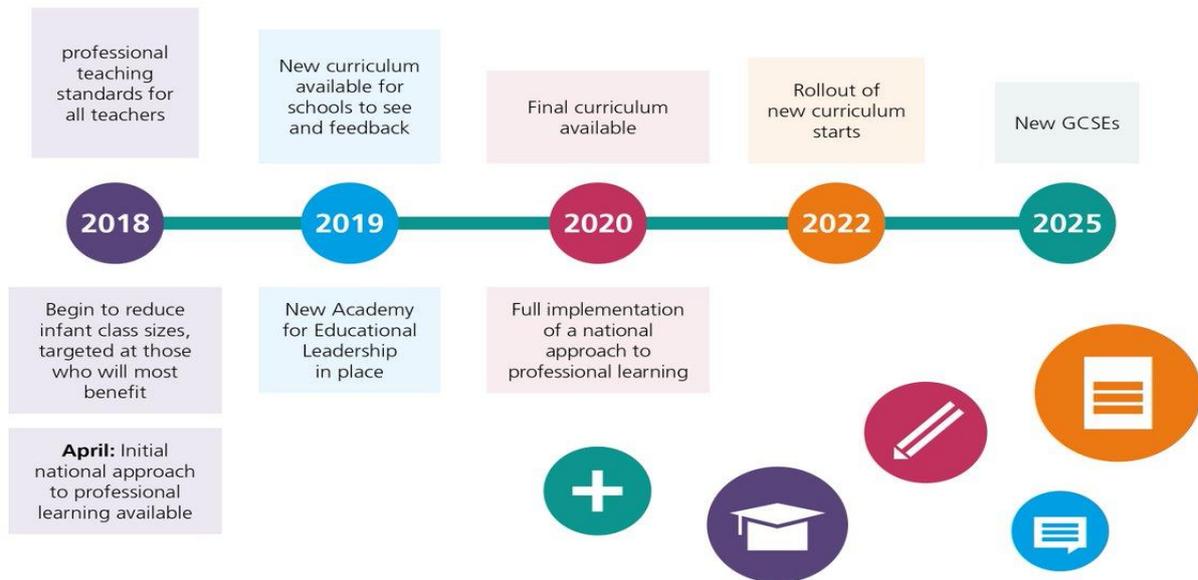
“We can all act to ensure carers know about and access help and support as early as possible in their caring journey. There is a key role for Government too. Welsh Government must ensure that local councils across Wales are fulfilling their legal duties under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act. Councils must identify carers and provide appropriate information and advice to enable them to look after their own health and wellbeing”.

Abridged from [Carers Wales Newsletter](#), July 2018

NEW CURRICULUM FOR SCHOOLS IN WALES

Education in Wales: Our national mission

ADDYSG CYMRU
EDUCATION WALES
cefnhwyth ein cenedl | our national mission



Cytûn continues to work closely with the Education Department of Welsh Government as the publication of the first draft of the new schools curriculum in spring 2019 approaches (see timetable above).

In May 2018 an officer from the Department met with the Free Church Council for Wales to discuss their perspective on the curriculum generally and Religious Education in particular. There is ongoing consultation also with the Church in Wales and the Catholic Education Service in Wales, and the Faith Communities Forum is represented on the Curriculum Strategic Stakeholder Group by Cytûn and the Buddhist Council for Wales.

A video of Ty Golding, Head of Curriculum, explaining the latest developments, can be viewed [here](#).



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