
CYTŪN POLICY BULLETIN

DECEMBER 2015



CHRISTIAN AID: PARIS DEAL USHERS IN A NEW DAWN

Christian Aid has hailed the final Paris climate agreement as a new era which has the potential to transform the global economy to address climate change.

Mohamed Adow, Christian Aid's Senior Climate Advisor said: "For the first time in history the whole world has made a public commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and deal with the impacts of climate change. Although different countries will move at different speeds, the transition to a low carbon world is now inevitable. Governments, investors and businesses must ride this wave or be swept away by it.

"Negotiations were long and hard fought but the result is an agreement which will usher in a new dawn of climate aware politics. The era of politicians burying their heads in the sand is over. This deal, in itself, will not deliver a safe world below 2 degrees. But it gives us a fighting chance to close the gap between the emissions the world is on course to produce and those that will put us on course to the agreed path. Leaders must increase their commitments before 2020 and every five years thereafter to ensure the deal evolves to meet the needs of a changing world."

Carl Sergeant, the Minister for Natural Resources in the Welsh Government, attended the Paris Conference, and the Welsh contribution to cutting carbon emissions and protecting biodiversity will be given legislative shape by the [Environment \(Wales\) Bill](#) which he is currently piloting through the Senedd. The Assembly Research Service's summary of the Bill as originally tabled can be found [here](#) and its report on the amendments made at stage 2 can be read [here](#). The Stage 3 debate will be held in January.

On the weekend before the Paris summit, despite the very wet Welsh weather, Wales joined the World and called out with one voice for a fair and ambitious deal. [Wales Climate](#)



[Action Day](#), organised by [Stop Climate Chaos Cymru](#), saw hundreds of people descend on Cardiff to take part in a mass bike ride from the city centre to the Senedd building in Cardiff Bay, where they rallied to call for strong action on climate change in Wales and at the UN talks.

The voice of the churches in Wales rang loud and clear at the event, with speakers including Huw Thomas, Head of Christian Aid Wales

Bishops' Adviser for Church and Society in the Church in Wales, Revd Canon Carol Wardman (pictured).

THE REFUGEE CRISIS: LATEST NEWS

The first Syrian refugees have [arrived in Wales](#) under the UK Government's resettlement programme. The latest news of Cytûn's work regarding the refugee crisis can be found in a [dedicated page on the Cytûn website](#). Hard copies available from the Cytûn office (back page). The Churches' Legislation Advisory Service has produced a useful [briefing](#) regarding the legal issues to be considered regarding offers to receive refugees into private homes or church buildings.

TAX AND SPEND: THE UK AND WELSH BUDGETS

The UK Government's [Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015](#) was announced on 25th November. As the Welsh Government does not yet have any direct taxation powers, this statement determined the money available to the devolved areas in Wales, given by a block grant calculated using the Barnett formula. The overall effect was estimated by the Welsh Government to be a 3.6% reduction (after inflation) in the so-called Departmental Expenditure Limit (the areas of spending over which the Welsh Government has discretion) between 2015-16 and 2019-20. However, capital spending increases by 4.7% (after inflation) over the same period.

On 8th December, Welsh Government Finance Minister Jane Hutt announced her [Draft Budget](#), showing how this spending would be allocated in 2016-17 (future years will be decided by the incoming Government following the May 2016 election). She was able to announce increases for health and social care and schools, and protected further education. However, higher education saw a funding cut of over £41m in the grants given by Welsh Government to universities, which has caused [considerable concern](#) in that sector. This is partly the result of the increasing cost of the **Welsh Tuition Fee Grant**, which pays up to £5,100 per year of Welsh students' university fees direct rather than adding them to their student loan. Student finance in Wales is currently being reviewed by Sir Ian Diamond, who published a [summary of the evidence received](#) (to which Cytûn contributed) on December 18th. His recommendations will be published in September.

The Draft Budget will be subject to scrutiny in the Senedd in the New Year, although on an accelerated timetable due to having to wait for the UK Spending Review in November.

In addition to the block grant, Welsh Government controls the nearly £1 billion annual receipts from business rates, which are used to part fund local government. The provisional [Local Government settlement](#) for 2016-17 was announced by Public Services Minister Leighton Andrews on 9th December. This involved further reductions in funding, ranging from 0.1% in Cardiff to much higher figures in some rural counties, such as Ceredigion (3.4%) and Powys (4.1%).

The Chancellor of the Exchequer's announcements in November included further measures relating to Wales. These were:

- A 'funding floor' so the Welsh Government will receive funding of at least 115% of comparable spending per head in England for this Parliament. We await the publication of further details on how this will operate in practice. The Welsh Government is asking for a permanent arrangement to be made through an Intergovernmental Agreement.
- The UK Government will legislate to remove the need for a referendum to introduce Welsh Rates of Income Tax, probably as part of the Wales Bill (see p. 3);
- The UK Government has agreed in principle to support a new infrastructure fund for the Cardiff Capital Region (the Cardiff City Deal), subject to receiving firm proposals from Cardiff Council and the Welsh Government;
- The electrification of the Great Western Mainline will go ahead, however a [Network Rail report](#) notes that electrification from Cardiff to Swansea may be delayed;
- The new prison in Wrexham will receive investment of £212 million;
- Although not mentioned in the House of Commons, [S4C](#)'s funding from the UK Government will be reduced from £6.7 million in 2015-16 to £5 million in 2019-20.

A number of the Chancellor's announcements on non-devolved areas will impact upon Wales including changes to Housing Benefit and Pension Credit. Overall police funding in England and Wales will be protected in real terms until 2019-20, however the overall funding that goes to individual police forces will remain the same in cash terms.

Unlike Scotland, whose Government announced its [Budget](#) on 16th December, the Welsh Government does not yet have direct tax-raising powers. However, it is currently legislating for the establishment of a **Welsh Revenue Authority** to be in charge of raising taxes from April 2018, when [Landfill Disposals Tax](#) and [Land Transaction Tax](#) (Stamp Duty Land Tax) will be devolved. The churches are represented at the consultations regarding a Welsh Landfill Community Fund which will disperse part of the revenue of this tax to community groups. These will be the first taxes (in the modern sense) to be levied by a Welsh Government, and an [informative video](#) explains more.

An explanatory note by the Assembly Research Service can be found [here](#) regarding the method to be used to secure the partial devolution of income tax to Wales, when implemented.

DRAFT WALES BILL

Since this Bulletin published an initial analysis of the [draft Wales Bill](#) in our November edition, the concerns expressed there regarding an apparent erosion of the Assembly's legislative competence should the Bill be passed in its present form have been echoed by many of the witnesses at the hearings arranged by the National Assembly's Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee and Westminster's Welsh Affairs Select Committee.

The Assembly Committee, which received evidence from Cytûn and the Bishops of the Church in Wales, has published its [report](#), which concludes that one way forward would be to pause proceedings and use the evidence gathered in scrutinising the draft Bill to prepare a consolidating Bill in close collaboration with key players: the Assembly, Welsh Government, legal practitioners, civic society and the UK Parliament. (para. 180). Alternatively, if the Bill is to proceed through Parliament during 2016 as currently proposed, then it requires substantial amendment to deal with the difficulties identified (para. 181). In either case, the Committee adds, in view of the Secretary of State's clearly stated wish for collaboration and partnership working, we believe he should set up a Constitutional Working Group involving the key players we refer to above to produce the lasting, durable constitutional settlement for Wales that its citizens deserve. (para 182).

The intention to include in the Bill income tax powers for Wales without a referendum (see above) has aroused considerable criticism in the Westminster Committee, as it will not be able to engage in pre-legislative scrutiny on those clauses. Its report will be published early in the New Year.

A useful summary of the debate so far can be found [here](#).

Cross Party Group on Faith

God in the classroom – the future of RE in Wales

Speaker to be confirmed. Chair: Darren Millar AM

Wednesday 10 February 2016, 12:00 – 13:15

Media Briefing Room, Senedd Building

To reserve a seat, email Jim Stewart on j.stewart@eauk.org

SUCCESSFUL FUTURES FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION?

In July, Huw Lewis, the Minister for Education and Skills, while answering a question in the Assembly, announced that 'Religion, Philosophy and Ethics' would replace Religious Education in schools in Wales as part of the implementation of the new curriculum recommended by Professor Graham Donaldson in his report [*Successful Futures*](#).

In subsequent correspondence with Cytûn and a number of its members, Mr Lewis has expressed clear support for Religious Education and for the Standing Advisory Councils on RE (SACREs) in each county, which are responsible for setting the subject syllabus in their area. He has also expressed support for the church schools of the Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Church which use denominational syllabuses.

In the meeting of the Faith Communities Forum in November, chaired by First Minister Carwyn Jones, it became clear that fears remained amongst the faith groups of Wales about what was happening. This Forum is now represented on the Strategic Stakeholders' Group for the new curriculum, and representatives from Cytûn and the Buddhist Council Wales attended the first meeting in December. The faith schools are represented on the Change Board which is managing the whole process, and the Wales Association of SACREs sits with us on the Stakeholders' Group.

This is a new way of drawing up a curriculum. Only the framework will be statutory. Schools and teachers will be expected to draw up their own detailed syllabus. The government is therefore restructuring initial teacher training and in-service training so that they are ready for the challenge. Religious Education is not the only subject where there is uncertainty about the future. Indeed, 'subjects' as such will disappear, being replaced by six 'Areas of Learning and Experience', viz. expressive arts; health and wellbeing; humanities; languages, literacy and communication; maths and numeracy; and science and technology.

Over the next three years, 60 'Pioneer Schools' will be experimenting with this new style of curriculum to see how it works, and feeding their experiences back. Teachers and children should, therefore, be central to the curriculum formation process, rather than civil servants, educational consultants – or even the members of the Boards.

There will be space for religion in a number of the Areas of Learning and Experience. Religion, Philosophy and Ethics will be taught within Humanities, but there will be room to develop spirituality within Health and Well-being, for it to inspire work in Expressive Arts and in Languages, Literacy and Communication. SACREs will have an important role in offering guidance to teachers as they give religion an appropriate space in these areas.

Teachers, pupils, parents and governors will also have a crucial role, in the Pioneer Schools initially and then in all schools, in thinking of new ways of inspiring, motivating and educating our children. In the same way as county Religious Education syllabuses currently encourage building links between schools and local places of worship, so the new curriculum encourages making such local connections across the curriculum.

By September 2018, the hope is that Pioneer Schools and others involved will have sufficient experience to begin three years of introducing the new curriculum to all schools. And then in September 2021 the new curriculum will be ready to be introduced officially in all schools throughout Wales.

Cytûn and individual denominations will continue to follow what is happening, and to offer support to local churches and Christians who are in any way part of these developments.

Shortened and translated from an article in Cristion January/February 2016

IS WALES FAIRER?

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has published a report entitled [Is Wales Fairer?](#) on how equal or unequal Wales is, following a series of evidence gathering sessions in which Cytûn and a number of our member churches participated. The Assembly Research Service's summary of the report can be found [here](#).

'Religion and belief' is a legally protected characteristic, and the report notes a rise in Islamophobic and anti-Semitic incidents, in attacks on Muslim boys in prisons, and the relatively high unemployment levels amongst Muslims.

Amongst the most disturbing findings are those related to young people in Wales:

- 42% of children aged 0-4 are living in poverty
- Boys and children in receipt of free school meals are still far more likely to be excluded from school than other children.
- Gipsy/Roma children are the least likely to achieve five good GCSEs (13%), followed by children in care or with additional educational needs (both 17%) and children in receipt of free school meals (26%). Educational achievement generally is lower amongst children in receipt of free school meals, those from ethnic minorities and amongst boys.
- Those aged 16-24 are four times more likely to be unemployed than those aged 35-54.

Fewer than one in four people felt that they could influence important decisions made about their local area.

COUNTER-EXTREMISM STRATEGY

In the November Bulletin, we drew attention to the UK Government's new [counter-extremism strategy](#). Counter-extremism is a matter reserved to Westminster, but implementation of much of the strategy in Wales will fall to Welsh Government. Cytûn has been represented at consultation events relating to the strategy, and especially its implications for religious institutions. Legislation is likely to be published early in the New Year.

The Department for Education in England is currently consulting on the part of the strategy which specifically focuses on [out-of-school education](#). Registration would be required for all education for under-19s that spanned six hours per week. While the regular children and youth meetings offered by most churches may not reach this threshold, one-off day trips, summer camps and holiday clubs might be affected. Although this consultation relates only to England, its results are likely to affect implementation of the strategy in Wales also.

Correction: In the November Bulletin, we commented that the Strategy document saw the English language as important for social cohesion. We should have noted that footnote 53 on page 38 also acknowledges the role of the Welsh language in this regard.

THE FUTURE OF THE BBC

Cytûn has contributed to a number of the parallel enquiries currently being conducted relating to the review of the BBC prior to renewal of its Royal Charter. The BBC Trust has now launched its own [consultation regarding news and current affairs](#) coverage in the devolved nations of the UK, including Wales. It is a brief consultation, closing on 17th January, and details can be found [here](#). Cytûn will be submitting a response and would welcome any further comments or suggestions to assist us in that by 10th January.

HISTORIC PLACES OF WORSHIP

Lively debate has continued in the Assembly about the [Historical Environment \(Wales\) Bill](#). A number of backbench amendments about historic places of worship were tabled at Stage 2, but all were either defeated or withdrawn. We expect some to return at Stage 3 in January, and denominational Property Officers will be meeting with Cadw in January.

Meanwhile, Cadw has published its [Strategic Action Plan for Historic Places of Worship in Wales](#), and the first meeting of the new Forum established under the Plan will take place in January which will provide a regular meeting place for denominational Property Officers, conservation officers and other interested parties to discuss strategy around the three thousand places of worship which are listed, and others of historic significance.

Lesley Griffiths, the Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty, has announced her response to the consultation about [Assets of Community Value](#), which might well include places of worship which the community values. The summary of responses notes some of the concerns raised by churches, such as the possible difficulties under charity law if a church building cannot be used for its intended purpose nor sold due to a community asset bid being made. Ms Griffiths indicates that it will be for the next Welsh Government to bring forward detailed proposals for legislation or other progress in this area.

THE HEALTH OF THE NATION

While much media coverage has revolved around spending levels in the NHS in Wales the National Assembly has been discussing a series of public health measures which have been attracting interest more widely.

On 1st December, the [Human Transplantation \(Wales\) Act](#) 2013 came into effect, changing from an 'opt-in' to an 'opt-out' system for organ donation in Wales. On the same day, Labour MSP Anne McTaggart put forward her party's bill for a similar system in Scotland. Scottish Ministers [decided they will wait to see](#) if the soft opt-out system is successful in Wales before making a decision. The Human Transplantation (Northern Ireland) Bill, introduced by Jo-Anne Dobson MLA, passed the Second Stage in the Northern Ireland Assembly on 16 November 2015. It has now moved into the Committee Stage for scrutiny. The Welsh Government gave evidence to the Committee as part of this scrutiny.

On 8th December, the National Assembly for Wales conducted a passionate debate around the provisions relating to e-cigarettes in the [Public Health \(Wales\) Bill](#). The Assembly agreed the principles of the Bill by 24-21 votes. It was clear, however, that there was considerable unease amongst AMs about the provisions for preventing the use of e-cigarettes in enclosed public spaces, and these clauses are likely to be ameliorated as the Bill progresses. Cytûn has submitted evidence about the proposal to restrict smoking tobacco and e-cigarettes in homes used as workplaces, which will particularly affect clergy. The Bill also restricts various non-medical invasive procedures, such as tattooing and body piercing, and requires local authorities to have a strategy for public toilets.

On 9th December, the Assembly debated again the idea of a [tax on sugary drinks](#), and voted 38-10 in favour of the principle, although this vote does not bind the Welsh Government. The previous day, a similar discussion in the Northern Ireland Assembly led the Health Minister there to agree to consider the idea further. However, a statement on 30th November said the UK Government [remains opposed](#) to the such a tax in England.

The Welsh Government has launched a formal consultation on the [Public Health Outcomes Framework for Wales](#). Consultation events will be held in Cardiff, Llandudno and Aberystwyth. Details are available at: www.publichealthwales.org/PHOF

LIVING WAGE RISES TO £8.25 PER HOUR

Cytûn, churches and other faith groups were well represented at the Living Wage Foundation's launch in Ikea, Cardiff, of the Living Wage rate for 2016-17, which is £8.25 per hour – £1.05 per hour higher than the UK Government's 'National Living Wage'.



Despite the good faith representation at the event, however, not a single faith employer based in Wales has been accredited as a Living Wage employer. The list of accredited employers can be found at <http://www.livingwage.org.uk/employers/region> (scroll to the bottom for Wales).

Picture: Vivian Paul Thomas.

EUROPE REFERENDUM DRAWS CLOSER

Although politicians and civil society in Wales are focused on the National Assembly and Police & Crime Commissioner elections in 2016 (see back page), it seems ever more likely that they will be closely followed by the Leave/Remain referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union. The Wales Stronger in Europe version of the UK-wide [Britain Stronger in Europe](#) campaign will launch in the New Year. [LeaveEU.Wales](#) launched in December.

The Assembly Research Service has produced a useful [update on the re-negotiation](#) of the terms of UK membership currently being conducted by the UK Government. The House of Commons' European Scrutiny Committee has produced a rather critical [report](#) on the lack of Parliamentary engagement in the renegotiation, and also says:

A negotiated settlement could well relate to powers which have been devolved, and so might require a Legislative Consent Motion from the Scottish Parliament and the other devolved assemblies. It is disappointing that none of the Devolved Administrations were consulted about the terms of the Prime Minister's letter of 10 November. We are not convinced that the Government has yet taken the need for genuine engagement with the Devolved Administrations seriously. (para 24)

The UK Government is very supportive of the European Union's current negotiation of major trade treaties with Canada and the USA (TTIP). However, some churches, trades unions and other civil society movements are concerned that these treaties might contain clauses which give substantial rights to private corporations over elected governments. The Methodist, Baptist and URC Joint Public Issues Team has produced a [briefing paper](#).

POSSIBLE REFORM OF MARRIAGE LAW

The Law Commission for England & Wales has published [***Getting Married: A Scoping Paper***](#), outlining the questions that could be addressed in a major review of Marriage Law. It will be for the UK Government to decide whether to ask the Commission to proceed with such a reform process and, if so, on what basis. It might include matters such as who can solemnize a marriage, and the relationship between marriages and civil partnerships.

ELECTIONS 2016

The National Assembly Elections and elections for the four Welsh Police & Crime Commissioners will be held on Thursday 5th May. The [regulated period](#), covering the rules for organisations planning to carry out activities which might reasonably be seen as encouraging the general public to vote for or against particular candidates or parties, begins on **5th January 2016**. Cytûn will be launching a dedicated election page on its website (www.cytun.org.uk) early in the New Year, where we will be publishing a handy guide to the elections, briefing papers on key policy areas, and two videos of real life stories from Wales and responses by leading politicians.

We encourage local Cytûn groups, in partnership with other churches or faith groups where appropriate, to run hustings for their local candidates. We would encourage one or two well organised hustings in each constituency, rather than multiplying events. There will be training events for those who wishing to organise or chair hustings as follows:

- Monday 8th February – Swansea (in partnership with Citizens Cymru)
- Thursday 11th February – Bangor (in partnership with TCC)
- Friday 11th February – Wrexham (in partnership with TCC)
- Monday 22nd February – Cardiff (in partnership with Citizens Cymru)
- Tuesday 23rd February – Newport (in partnership with Citizens Cymru)

Those who would be willing to undertake such tasks in future, and experienced chairs and organisers who have now stood down but are willing to share experience with us, would be most welcome at these events.

The Campaign to End Loneliness, in partnership with Ageing Well in Wales, is holding the 2nd Annual Learning Network Conference on Wednesday 20th January 2016 at City Hall Cardiff. Join 150+ other people across the UK who are working to address loneliness in older age to discuss brand new research and good practice, and learn how to better identify and measure loneliness. Participants will have the opportunity to hear expert keynotes and to participate in interactive workshops. (The conference sessions do not start until 11am to allow delegates plenty of travel time to Cardiff).

For more information, please visit <http://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/>

TCC (Together Creating Communities) is holding Active Citizenship Residential Training from 25th-27th February in Penmaenmawr. This training aims to build skills and confidence in taking community action, building community partnerships and leading campaigns. Further details can be obtained from <http://www.tcc-wales.org.uk/#!training/cmni>



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