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# CYTŪN POLICY BULLETIN

## OCTOBER 2018

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### A SUCCESSFUL FUTURE FOR WELSH EDUCATION?

As the publication of the first draft of the new schools curriculum in spring 2019 approaches, Cytûn continues to be at the heart of discussions on behalf of the churches.



In the September meeting of the Strategic Stakeholder Group for the Curriculum, we heard an upbeat assessment from Professor Graham Donaldson (pictured left). He is the author of the report which recommended a new curriculum, [Successful Futures](#). He rejoiced in the way in which teachers in the Pioneer Schools have grasped the opportunities offered to develop a new curriculum. He also introduced the ideas contained in his review of Estyn, [A Learning Inspectorate](#). This emphasises that Estyn must work to be perceived as a body which supports teachers and schools, rather than only monitoring and inspecting them.

One aspect of Estyn's work which is appreciated is its subject reviews, and in June it published [Religious education at key stage 2 and key stage 3](#), which gives a snapshot of Religious Education for children aged 7-14. The report recommends that brighter children should be stretched further by the subject, and calls for better transition arrangements between primary and secondary schools in teaching the subject. It is no surprise, perhaps, that the report notes that pupil attainment and satisfaction with the subject drops as they get older, but Appendix 3 includes a number of heartening case studies showing what is possible when Religious Education is taught imaginatively and engagingly.

Estyn's report stands in marked contrast to the conclusion of the National Commission on Religious Education, [Religion and worldviews: the way forward](#), which comes to the conclusion that *Religious Education (RE) in too many schools is not good enough to prepare pupils adequately for the religious and belief diversity they will encounter, nor to support them to engage deeply with the questions raised by the study of worldviews* (para 3, page 3). Although the report refers to Religious Education in Britain, all its evidence comes from England, and its recommendations are directed to schools, local authorities and the Department for Education in England. Some of these recommendations are consonant with the changes being made in the Welsh curriculum.

In Wales, we heard that the Government intends to legislate for the new curriculum through a Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill in 2020-21. The Bill will legislate for the status of Religious Education. Hitherto, Welsh Government has indicated that no new legislation would be required, as the subject is already statutory, but it is now intended that this measure will refer specifically to RE, Relationships and Sexuality Education and Welsh as subjects. Cytûn will be following these proposals very closely.

The Stakeholder Group heard also from Huw Foster-Evans (pictured right), Chief Executive of the [National Academy for Educational Leadership Wales](#), who outlined his work with educational leaders of all kinds.



## NEW YOUTH BOARD FOR WALES

Following [an inquiry into youth work in Wales](#) carried out by the Assembly's Children, Young People and Education Committee, to which a number of church organisations contributed, Welsh Government has established an Interim Youth Board, chaired by former Children's Commissioner Keith Towler.

In a message directed to young people, Mr Towler says, "Now that I have been asked to look at youth work I want you to be a part of this from the start so I shall be launching a Wales wide youth survey on the state of youth work in Wales. This will give you an early opportunity to describe what you value and what you want from youth work in Wales. The survey is intended to get young people in Wales talking about youth work and the ideas and thoughts that you provide will help the Board as it begins its work. The survey will provide an important opportunity for young people to shape the way youth work is provided in the future. I really hope that you will want to be involved and I will be in touch again soon with more details.

Alongside this message I have also written to those who work in the youth work sector. I will keep in touch with young people as we work on all this. I shall be developing a communications plan using social media and other formats so that you can hear about the progress we are making, and contact me if you would like to ask anything.

The opportunity is now here to define a future for youth work so that you and all young people in Wales, wherever you live and in whatever circumstances, can fulfil your potential supported by a vibrant youth work sector."

Cytûn hopes that young people and youth workers in the church sector in Wales will be keen to contribute to these surveys. Further details can be obtained from Keith Towler via [youthworkboard@gov.wales](mailto:youthworkboard@gov.wales)

## DIVORCE REFORM TO BE CONSIDERED

The Secretary of State for Justice in the UK Government has announced a consultation on introducing "no-fault" divorce in England and Wales: [Reducing family conflict: Reform of the legal requirements for divorce](#). The issue of contested divorce on the grounds of unreasonable behaviour came to public prominence as a result of the judgment in *Owens v Owens* [2018] UKSC 41, in which the Supreme Court unanimously rejected Mrs Tini Owens's appeal against the refusal of the lower courts to grant her a divorce that was opposed by her husband – and did so with obvious reluctance.

At present, divorcing couples are forced to blame each other for the marriage breakdown on the grounds of "unreasonable behaviour", adultery or desertion, or prove they have been separated for a minimum of two years – even if the separation is mutual. If the divorce is contested, and a spouse cannot prove "fault", then couples currently have to wait five years before a divorce is granted.

Proposals detailed in the consultation include:

- retaining the irretrievable breakdown of the marriage as the sole ground for divorce;
- removing the need to show evidence of the other spouse's conduct or a period of living apart;
- introducing a new notification process where one, or possibly both parties, can notify the court of the intention to divorce; and
- removing the opportunity for the other spouse to contest the divorce application.

The consultation also seeks views on the minimum period for the process between the interim decree of divorce (decree nisi) and the final decree of divorce (decree absolute). That will allow couples time to reflect on the decision to divorce and to reach agreement on arrangements for the future where divorce is inevitable.

The consultation will close on **10 December**. Responses may be made on-line [here](#)

## Waste free packed lunches for your children

Cling film, foil and individually packed items such as yoghurt pots, crisps, chocolate and drinks in cartons, all add to the huge amount of plastic waste generated every year. So, Cytûn member A Rocha UK offers some tips on how to reduce the waste:

- Pack sandwiches in a reusable container, kitchen roll or greaseproof paper.
- Buy large packets of biscuits, crisps, etc. and put a few in a reusable container
- Use cutlery and a drinks bottle that can be washed and used again
- Pack fruit (apples or bananas in their own packaging!), as leftovers can be composted
- Only pack what children can eat/like to eat – this will reduce food wastage

## LONELINESS AND FRIENDSHIP



advice and support for older age  
**Independent  
Age**

Independent Age: the older people's charity offering free friendship services to help alleviate loneliness has launched their befriending service in South Wales. "We are already seeing the measurable benefits of befriending

in many parts of the UK so we are very excited to be bringing a similar service to Cardiff and Newport". Gavin Stewart, the full time Wellbeing Officer who is kick starting the service in Cardiff and Newport before expanding across South Wales, is looking for volunteers who'd like the opportunity to brighten an older persons' day over a cup of tea and a chat.

We provide the training you need, carry out DBS checks and pay travel expenses. If you'd like to find out how you can get involved please visit the Independent Age website to find out what opportunities are in your area. Alternatively you can give Gavin a call on: 0207 241 8544 or 07522 240 139 or email [gavin.stewart@independentage.org](mailto:gavin.stewart@independentage.org)

Meanwhile, the Welsh Government Minister for Social Services and Children, Huw Irranca-Davies AM, will be launching a consultation on loneliness and isolation in Wales at an [event in the Senedd on October 23](#), organised by [Spice Time Credits](#) and the [Campaign to End Loneliness](#), and Cytûn will be represented.

## CREATIVE ACTIVITIES IN RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS

Knit and natter clubs, drawing classes and a multitude of other creative activity happens in churches and chapels and other religious buildings across Wales.



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.

## Settled status for EU citizens resident in the UK

Churches, along with many other community groups, were invited to a seminar in Cardiff on September 21 regarding the UK Government's proposed Settled Status scheme for EU citizens resident in the UK. Coincidentally, this was the day of the Salzburg informal meeting of the European Council, and the following morning [Theresa May confirmed](#) that the scheme will proceed even if no comprehensive agreement can be finalised with the European Union.

The scheme will be open to any EU citizen and immediate family member who arrives before 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020, and future family members. There is no need for Irish citizens to apply but they can if they wish. Those EU citizens resident continuously in the UK for 5 years or more by the time they apply will be granted **settled status**. Continuous residence means no more than one absence over 6 months in any 12, with various exceptions (eg childbirth, sickness, military service) EU citizens resident in the UK on or before 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 but for less than five years will be granted **pre settled status**. Once they reach 5 years residency in the UK they make a free of charge application for settled status.

The application process will be simple, streamlined and user friendly, online or through an Android phone app (it's not fully compatible with iphones). There will be a new customer contact centre staffed by case workers (not just call handlers). Digital support will be available for those who need it. In many cases, only ID (passport/ID card, verifiable through the app) and a NI number will be required; the Home Office will correlate the NI number with HMRC and DWP records to confirm the length of residency in the UK. Other evidence will also be accepted. If evidence is not available, pre settled status can be granted and then settled status after 5 years free of charge.

The fee will be £65, £32.50 for those under 16 (free of charge for looked-after children). A previously granted permanent residence card can be swapped for settled status free of charge.

The only reason to refuse an application from an EU citizen resident in the UK is serious criminality – using the EU law definition of being a “genuine, present and serious threat to the interests of society”. Errors or omissions in applications will be dealt with prior to decision.

Once gained, the only ways to lose settled status will be leaving the UK for more than 5 years; or serious criminality. After 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 the definition of serious criminality changes to a crime that may attract a 12 month or longer prison sentence. If a person loses settled status, then any family members who gained their status through that person (e.g. dependents or 3<sup>rd</sup> country family members of an EU citizen) will lose their settled status also.

The scheme will be made publicly available in March 2019. The Home Office website is constantly updated with news of the scheme: <https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families> Even more detail can be found in the Guidance for Caseworkers - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-caseworker-guidance> EU citizens and interested parties can sign up for email updates here: <https://gov.smartwebportal.co.uk/homeoffice/public/webform.asp?id=67&id2=627DF7>

Because of the constant changes, PDF and paper documents are not being issued yet.

Key information will be translated into the 23 official EU languages and Welsh, but not the application form, detailed guidance or phone app. For this reason amongst others, the Home Office is very keen to involve faith and community groups in promoting the scheme, informing EU citizens and signposting them to the website. They are also seeking groups who would be willing to assist applicants in making their applications. **Churches were specifically mentioned** in this context as the Home Office is aware of the important role they play in helping overseas citizens in the UK, especially those who are in any way vulnerable.

Toolkits will be made available for employers, local authorities and community groups with videos, leaflets, posters etc. Content can be cut and pasted into your own materials. The employers' toolkit is already available <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-employer-toolkit> , others will follow.

In October the Home Office will convene with the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) a round table for 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations who are interested in helping. Cytûn has signed up to attend and will circulate details when they are known. We would be very glad to hear from any churches who would like to help in this scheme – please contact [gethin@cytun.cymru](mailto:gethin@cytun.cymru) in the first instance.

## **BREXIT AND OUR LAND**

Welsh Government is consulting about how to use public money to support farmers in Wales following Brexit. They propose abolishing single payments to farmers (based on the area of land farmed) gradually, and establish two new schemes:

- The Economic Resilience Scheme, which will help farmers to market produce, improve productivity, diversify, control risks and exchange knowledge and skills;
- The Public Goods Scheme, which will pay farmers for their environmental work in strengthening habitat resilience, reducing flood risk, improving air and water quality, and mitigating the effects of climate change.

The Public Goods Scheme is similar to a scheme announced for England by the UK Government. The powers to implement schemes in England and Wales will be given by the [Agriculture Bill](#) introduced to Westminster on September 12. Bespoke legislation for Wales is expected at a later date.

Cytûn's Wales and Europe Working Group hopes to respond to these proposals by October 30, and we would like to hear from farmers and others working in the rural economy. Please contact [gethin@cytun.cymru](mailto:gethin@cytun.cymru) if you have comments to contribute.

## **PEACE IN THE CITY**

A bilingual booklet *Peace in the City* (Jon Gower), telling the story of the peace movement in Cardiff, price £5.00, was launched at the National Eisteddfod in August. There will be a re-launch on November 15th as part of the Temple of Peace's 80th birthday celebrations with an emphasis on inviting local schools and non-Welsh-speaking chapels and churches. The booklet, a colourful and informative travelogue, is accompanied by an App which can be downloaded for free. If groups want to arrange a tour in the spring and summer of 2019 we would happy to oblige with a Peace Trail event. For further information please contact [ralun.evans36@gmail.com](mailto:ralun.evans36@gmail.com)

## **PEACE TRAIN**

A Peace Train, supported by church leaders including the Archbishop of Wales and the Bishop of St Asaph in the Church in Wales, is planned for October 24th, United Nations Day. It will urge the UK Government to become a signatory to the United Nations' Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Local people in North Wales and the Marches will be invited to sign a statement of support and hand it to a local collector, who will add it to the Peace Train starting from HOPE station. At Wrexham, Shrewsbury and other stations they will pick up statements which have been collected in many other places. Similar collections will be happening from Cardiff and other cities in the south. From Newport, on the same day, the team will take the whole 'mailbag' to London and deliver to representatives at the House of Commons.

Further details can be obtained from Rt Revd John Davies (former Bishop of Shrewsbury) at [davies.johnd@btinternet.com](mailto:davies.johnd@btinternet.com)

## **Cross-Party Group on Faith: *Islam and extremism***

**Guest Speaker: Saleem Kidwai OBE, Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Wales**

Wednesday 7 November 2018, 12.00 – 13.15, Media Briefing Room, The Senedd

To reserve a seat, email Jim Stewart on [jimstewartwales@gmail.com](mailto:jimstewartwales@gmail.com)

**Advertised on behalf of Darren Millar AM, Chair of the Cross-Party Group on Faith**

## SOUP 'N' SOX ON THE STREETS OF COLWYN BAY AND LLANDUDNO



Many local Cytûn groups work to support those in their communities who find themselves on the streets. Colwyn Bay and Rhos on Sea Cytûn recently held a table top sale and a total



of £500 was raised to support the Soup n Sox team, who go out on the streets of Colwyn Bay and Llandudno every week to connect with people. The cheque was presented by the local Cytûn Treasurer to Scott Jenkinson who runs the Soup 'n Sox project.

## BANK CLOSURES DEPRIVE ENTIRE COMMUNITIES



The historic Lloyds Bank in Llandoverly which closed in 2017.  
Picture: Eleri Owen Edwards

In a recent meeting of the Baptist Union of Wales's Church and Social Responsibility Committee there was discussion about the numbers of bank branches which are closing across the country and leave some areas without a bank at all. Although the Post Office offers some service, it does not offer the full range of banking services. Online banking is available, but not everyone can use it due to lack of skill or resources. Furthermore, online banking is not possible through the medium of Welsh.

The meeting asked Cytûn to co-ordinate a letter to the main banks expressing concern on behalf of the churches. The Policy Officer will contact Cytûn members in this respect shortly. In the mean time, he will welcome any further information or comments at the address below.

## CONTACTING CYTÛN'S POLICY OFFICER or subscribe to the Bulletin by email



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