

---

# CYTŪN POLICY BULLETIN

## APRIL/MAY 2016

---



### PARTY MANIFESTOS

Prior to the election, Cytûn contacted the political parties in Wales to respond to their draft manifestos and other policy statements, and present some ideas for the final manifestos. Some of our member organisations did the same. All the manifestos have now been published, and we have had an opportunity to read them through.

Cytûn does not have the resources to analyse the content of the manifestos in every policy area, but we are offering today some detail on the areas which are of greatest concern to our member churches, and a summary of proposals in some other policy areas. We have tried to concentrate on matters which have not so far been the principal focus of debates in the media.

The parties have differed greatly in how they have presented their policies. For example, Plaid Cymru and the Wales Green Party especially have presented a number of long-term aspirations alongside their policy proposals for the Fifth Assembly. Some parties have published specific manifestos for certain sections of the population (such as young people or the LGBT community) or with regards to particular policy areas (such as health). Some have published additional detail in supplementary material. As they are currently in government, Welsh Labour's manifesto develops ideas from the policy documents and current Budget of the Welsh Government in a number of areas. The only other party to publish detailed costings at this stage is the Welsh Liberal Democrats.

The lack of reference to a particular policy in a party's manifesto does not necessarily mean that it opposes that policy. That is especially true in the case of new policies proposed by one party to which the other parties have not yet had an opportunity to respond.

#### **Faith, religion, "extremism" and equality**

Specific references to religion are few in number. There are some references to "extremism" and "equality" which may be intended to include religion, but do not specifically say so.

- Welsh Labour says, *We will work with the UK Government and our partners to share best practice in guaranteeing the security of the people of Wales and to act against extremism* (p. 9) and *We are the party of equality and social justice* (p. 9), but with no specific reference to religion. Labour's draft manifesto included reference to strengthening the work of the Inter-faith Council for Wales and the Faith Communities Forum, but this has been omitted from the final document.
- The Liberal Democrats promise to *Attract more visitors to Wales' Places of Worship, including with an integrated strategy to promote faith tourism paths such as the Cistercian Way* (p. 92). This is in response to the work of Sanctaid, which is a member organisation of Cytûn. There are no other specific references to religion, but in terms of equality the party's commitment is to *Ensuring all people are treated fairly, including monitoring how diverse communities are affected by policing priorities and methods* (t.60), with specific promises to ensure equality between the sexes and to people of different races within the public appointments process (p. 60).

- The Green Party is the only party to accede to Cytûn's request to include reference to religion within its two promises on equality, viz. *Review and strengthen legislation protecting the rights of people against discrimination on the grounds of age, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, disability, ethnic background, or other such protected characteristics and Create a Minister for Equality, to ensure that the needs of all peoples in our society are proofed across service delivery. From the young to the old, from sexual and gender equality to religious equality, and embracing all our ethnic, religious and social groups in Wales.* (p. 21).
- The Welsh Conservatives are the only party to include a dedicated section entitled *Engage with faith communities* (p. 45), including the following commitments:
  - *Work with faith communities to support community cohesion and tackle extremism.*
  - *Increase the frequency of meetings of the Faith Communities Forum.*
  - *Respect people's right to wear religious symbols in the workplace.*
  - *Raise the profile of ethics, philosophy and religion in the school curriculum.* [The only reference to religious education in any manifesto].
  - *Maintain funding for chaplaincy services in the Welsh NHS.*
  - *Review spiritual care guidance for the Welsh NHS and develop guidance for other care settings.*
  - *Develop a strategy for Welsh religious heritage.*

They also include two additional references to religion. Firstly, they promise to *Provide free school transport to more pupils attending their nearest faith or Welsh language secondary school.* (p. 24), which reflects a request made by Cytûn and other organisations. [This is the only reference in any manifesto to the role of religious providers in delivering education]. Secondly, they commit to *seeking greater involvement of disabled people, and those who are LGBT, or from different ethnic or religious backgrounds* (p. 44).

- UKIP includes a detailed statement on their approach to religion: *We recognise that British and Welsh values include tolerance of religion. UKIP is committed to protecting religious freedoms for all believers in the UK, in accordance with Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, we will also challenge the 'culture of offence' as it risks shutting down free speech. We will not condone any faith position which is itself intolerant and refuses to recognise the human rights of others.* (p. 39). Specifically, UKIP pledges to *support the use of CCTV in all abattoirs, as well as "method of production" labelling on all meat, fish and dairy produce. This would include - in the absence of a ban on the practice - an indication as to whether an animal has been slaughtered without prior stunning* (p. 29). We assume that this implies prohibiting slaughter for halal and kosher meat. They also promise to *ensure that schools receive support in any suspected case of extremism or radicalisation* (p. 19).
- Plaid Cymru says *we declare everyone who lives in Wals, whatever their language, the colour of their skin, their religion, their roots, their gender or sexual orientation, as a full and equal citizen of Wales* (p. 27). In the more detailed section on *Ensuring Equal Opportunities and respecting Diversity* (p. 155) there is no reference to religion. There is a short section under the heading *Preventing terrorism and tackling modern slavery* (p. 163), which says *We will provide increased support for programme tackling religious extremism in Wales, extending the coverage of existing good practice and adopting a consistent and proportionate approach across the country. In developing a Wales strategy, we will also consider the range of contemporary academic research on the subject, in addition to working with communities affected, to better understand the causes of alienation and religious*

*extremism*. There are no further details, and no explanation as to why “religious extremism” is linkled with “modern slavery” in this way.

## **Refugees**

We asked all parties to include a commitment to support the reception of refugees into Wales and that they should be fairly treated.

- Plaid Cymru promises *We will seek to make Wales a Nation of Sanctuary for those fleeing war or persecution with a basic level of support provided to help refugees and asylum seekers integrate into Welsh society.* (p. 163). This forms part of a more comprehensive policy regarding migration, and a promise to seek the devolution of migration policy to Wales.
- The Wales Green Party promises to *Work with local authorities to house refugees, provide support services for those in need, and ensure they are welcomed into our communities.* (p. 21)
- The Liberal Democrats say that they will *Establish Wales as a Nation of Sanctuary, an open and welcoming place for those in need, and support cities establishing themselves as Cities of Sanctuary* (p. 97), commenting that *there is much more that could be done to create a culture of hospitality and welcome for people seeking sanctuary.* (p. 95). They offer a number of detailed policy prescriptions in the field.
- The manifestos of Welsh Labour, UKIP and the Welsh Conservatives are silent on these matters.

## **Wales’s international obligations**

Cytûn asked the parties to commit to Wales playing its part in fighting climate change and improving the lives of people overseas. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 has introduced such aims for the public services in Wales. The parties offer the following further pledges in this area:

- Welsh Labour says, *In recognising our international obligations to others we will ensure Wales plays a determined part in improving the lives of people in war-torn places and disaster zones.* (p. 9). *In playing our part to protect the environment, we will commit to stretching emissions and landfill targets that will see a Welsh Labour Government becoming carbon neutral by 2020. We will support the development of tidal lagoons and community energy schemes, and support the roll-out of free smart energy meters to all homes to reduce bills....Sustainable development will remain a central organising principle of our Welsh Labour Government. Our Environment Act provides a strong framework for long-term action to counter climate change. We will report on the new Well-being indicators to measure the progress our country makes.* (p. 9)
- The Welsh Liberal Democrats say, *Wales should play our role in international development, building genuine partnerships with the developing world, involving marginalised groups in Wales, supporting cultural exchanges, and helping people out of poverty. We will cement Wales’ position as a globally responsible nation.* (p. 95). There is a specific promise to double Wales’s funding of international development. As international aid is not a devolved competence, we assume that this refers to the Wales4Africa programme. The Liberal Democrats also say: *We will set a target for net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and to produce all our electricity from renewable sources by 2025, with a carbon impact assessment for all new laws to assess their environmental impact* (p. 47). This section of the manifesto includes detailed policies in this regard.
- The Wales Green Party says, *Climate change: We will make Wales a leader in tackling this global problem by raising the ambition of emissions reduction*

*targets, and setting out infrastructure priorities to meet these targets, such as in energy, housing and transport. We will incentivise green businesses to base themselves in our communities, ensuring Wales is an incubator for the innovation needed to tackle this global threat. We will work to manage and alleviate the impacts of climate change, and help those suffering in Wales, especially from flooding and sea level rise. We will ensure the Future Generations and Environment Acts have real impact, rather than being purely aspirational.* (p. 6) The manifesto includes detailed policies regarding decarbonised energy generation, and emphasises energy efficiency in domestic dwellings and sustainable transport.

- The Welsh Conservatives say, *The accord achieved at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris challenges Wales to work with other countries to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and outdated polluting technologies.* (p. 35). They wish to change planning regulations in order to prevent *over-dependence on wind farms, and encourage a variety of renewable energy production* (p. 35), and promote the insulation of homes (p. 36).
- UKIP proposes to stop all expenditure regarding climate change and use the money to promote road and rail transport (p. 31). The Wales manifesto does not refer to Wales4Africa, but it is known that UKIP is opposed to such expenditure.
- Plaid Cymru promises to *develop a Welsh international policy* (p. 186) and refer to working closely with other small nations, especially those which are working towards independence. They say *The greatest challenge humanity has ever faced is to turn our impact on the planet from destructive to benign. We will position Wales as a nation leading in the net zero commitments made in Paris 2015* (p. 127) and there is a lengthy section of policies relating to renewable energy, energy-efficient homes and sustainable development.

### **Religious buildings**

Cytûn has expressed concern regarding the future of our historic places of worship. Reference is made above to the two parties who have referred to religious tourism. The same two parties (Welsh Liberal Democrats and Welsh Conservatives) are keen to introduce a 'Right to Bid' which might mean that community groups could frustrate the sale of redundant church buildings in their communities. On the other hand, it may be that churches themselves would wish to bid for some redundant buildings, with or on behalf of the community.

UKIP proposes the abolition of Cadw as a government department, its responsibilities to be divided between Visit Wales (to promote tourism) and local authorities (with regard to planning consent).

### **Mental health, dementia and carers**

All parties say that they would give a greater priority to mental health within the health service, and to dementia care in particular. In its Welsh language manifesto (but not in the English language version), UKIP has adopted Cytûn's policy proposal to *improve Welsh language provision for dementia care and end of life care, especially in areas where many people speak Welsh, so that first language Welsh speakers with dementia or at the end of their lives can communicate more comfortably* (Welsh edition, p. 10. Dementia care in general is on p. 12 of the English language manifesto). The Liberal Democrats also say, *The lack of provision for Welsh language speakers in the health care system can actively hamper their recovery - only 3-6% of people are actively offered healthcare services in Welsh. When an individual comes into contact with primary healthcare, it will often be during a period of frailty when they are feeling vulnerable. Individuals living with a wide variety of health issues such as dementia or experiencing a mental health crisis can*

*experience severe difficulty in expressing their needs through a second language.* (p. 91). They have a number of detailed policy proposals to tackle this matter.

All parties promise to improve support for carers and offer specific policies to support children with autism.

### **Affordable homes**

In line with the Homes4Wales campaign, supported by a number of Cytûn members, each party promises to increase the number of houses being built, and in particular the number of new affordable homes. Comparing the numbers is not easy as they refer to different measures in each case; UKIP is the only party to reject the idea of a target number. The Green Party and the Conservatives place a particular emphasis on refurbishing empty homes and UKIP and the Liberal Democrats on converting empty offices and other buildings (such as chapels?) into homes.

Plaid Cymru, the Conservatives and UKIP emphasise the need for housing developments in rural areas to be proportionate to local demand and (in the case of Plaid Cymru) the linguistic make-up of the community; UKIP would allow a local referendum on major developments.

Cytûn has expressed concerns regarding the Right to Buy social housing. Plaid Cymru and Welsh Labour promise to abolish it, and the Conservatives to extend it.

### **Reform of local government**

- The Welsh Conservatives have adopted Cytûn's policy suggestion of limiting the right of town and community councils to co-opt members, and they wish to see devolution of additional powers to the principal local authorities.
- Plaid Cymru wish to see town and community councils merged into about 150 area councils across Wales, to keep the existing 22 principal authorities, and create regional combined authorities to fulfil some functions jointly.
- Welsh Labour wishes to see 8 or 9 principal authorities, and to devolve further powers to those authorities.
- The Liberal Democrats, UKIP and the Green Party are in favour of devolving power from the Welsh Government to local authorities and introducing a proportional representation system for them. UKIP also wishes to abolish the current cabinet system.

There is plenty more in the party manifestos, which can be accessed on the web:

- Welsh Labour - [http://www.togetherfor.wales/read\\_manifesto](http://www.togetherfor.wales/read_manifesto)
- Welsh Conservatives - <http://www.welshconservatives.com/news/welsh-conservative-manifesto-promises-secure-real-change-wales>
- Plaid Cymru - <http://www.plaid2016.cymru/manifesto>
- Welsh Liberal Democrats - [http://www.welshlibdems.wales/full\\_manifesto](http://www.welshlibdems.wales/full_manifesto). A shorter summary manifesto is available here [http://www.welshlibdems.wales/summary\\_manifesto](http://www.welshlibdems.wales/summary_manifesto). [Page references in this Bulletin are to the full manifesto].
- UKIP - <http://ukip.wales/2016-manifesto/>
- Wales Green Party – <https://wales.greenparty.org.uk/manifesto16/>

WCVA has published an analysis of the parties' proposals for the third sector generally, along with links to the manifestos of other Welsh organisations, here: <http://www.wcva.org.uk/what-we-do/assembly-election-2016>

## A Prayer for Candidates

O God, you are the source of all authority, and of every good work.

We give thanks for all those willing to accept the responsibility of government, to take the risks of standing for election, and to submit themselves to the will of the people in our democratic processes.

We pray that those seeking office may be guided by an unselfish desire for what is best for all those they strive to represent; and to promote honesty and understanding as they debate the issues before us.

Give the candidates strength and courage during the campaign;  
and when the results are known, give them grace and humility in both victory and defeat,  
and the generosity to work together in the years ahead,  
for the good of the country they aspire to serve.

We make our prayer through Jesus Christ,  
the One in whom all live and move and have their being. Amen.

## A prayer for others involved

God of love

We hold before you all those who are involved in the election process,  
though not standing for office:

For partners, families and friends of the candidates;

For campaigners, party officials, and members of pressure groups;

For civil servants, advisers, and those who must remain impartial;

For those who work in the news media,

or who in other ways spread information and promote debate.

Pour out upon them all your sustaining power at this time of stress.

Protect them, and those for whom they care, from temptation;

and endow them with a sense of balance and of humour.

May they advise with wisdom and compassion, and know that their contribution is essential in creating an open, generous and truly democratic society.

All this we ask through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and our Friend. Amen.

*Carol Wardman, Church in Wales*

***Further worship material for the election period,  
together with videos, briefing papers, a guide to voting,  
and links to other useful websites, at:***

**[www.cytun.org.uk/elections2016](http://www.cytun.org.uk/elections2016)**



## CONTACTING THE CYTÛN POLICY OFFICER

Parch./Revd Gethin Rhys - Swyddog Polisi/Policy Officer

Cytûn - Eglwys Ynghyd yng Nghymru/Churches Together in Wales

58 Richmond Road, Caerdydd/Cardiff, CF24 3AT

Tel: 029 2046 4378 Mudol/mobile: 07889 858062

E-bost/E-mail: [gethin@cytun.org.uk](mailto:gethin@cytun.org.uk)  @CytunNew



***Hapus i gyfathrebu yn Gymraeg ac yn Saesneg. Happy to communicate in Welsh and English***

Cytûn is a registered company in England and Wales | Number: 05853982 | Registered name: "Cytûn: Eglwys Ynghyd yng Nghymru/Churches Together in Wales Limited" |

Cytûn is a registered charity | Number: 1117071

Publication date: 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

The next bulletin will be published after the Welsh elections towards the end of May 2016.