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# CYTŪN POLICY BULLETIN

## MAY 2016

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### NEW ASSEMBLY AND WESTMINSTER SESSIONS BEGIN

Following the [dramatic start to the fifth National Assembly for Wales](#), the initial legislative programme of the new Welsh Government has been announced, and the new programme for the Westminster Government has been announced in the Queen's Speech. Much of the content of the two programmes depends on the result of the referendum regarding the UK's membership of the European Union, to be held on June 23 (see p. 6). If the result is to leave the EU, then the priorities of both Governments are certain to be affected. The Assembly Research Service has produced a [handy summary](#) of what the effects of either result would be on the work of the Welsh Government and the National Assembly.

On May 18 Carwyn Jones AM was re-elected as First Minister of Wales. In accepting, he acknowledged that his government will not have a majority in the Fifth Assembly, and will therefore have to work with other parties. He [outlined plans for the first 100 days of his administration](#) (until the end of August), agreed with the principal opposition party, Plaid Cymru. No legislation will be brought forward during this period, in order to concentrate on:



- Securing the future of the steel industry in Wales (including regarding procurement, according to Leader of the Opposition Leanne Wood AM in her speech).
- Campaigning to remain in the European Union.
- Working with the UK Government on the Wales Bill.
- Establishing "a new way of doing law-making ... better

suited to the parliamentary responsibilities" of the Assembly. No detail was given, but it appears likely to involve restructuring the Assembly's Committees to facilitate the legislative process.

- Establishing a new Cabinet Office which will work on implementing the six principal pledges in Welsh labour's manifesto, and three liaison committees with Plaid Cymru to work on Finance, Legislation and the Constitution.

After this initial period, the First Minister foresaw the following bills being presented:

- A Public Health Bill. [According to Plaid Cymru](#), the Bill lost in the last Assembly will be reintroduced, but without the ban on smoking e-cigarettes in public places.
- An Additional Learning Needs Bill, based on the [draft Bill](#), but also including measures relating to people with autism (resulting from a [campaign by the National Autistic Society](#) which was backed by all parties during the election).
- Legislating to prevent physical punishment of children. (Responding to requests before the election by [a number of churches and other organisations](#) in Wales).
- Strengthening the [Welsh Language Measure](#).

Amongst other priorities on which Mr Jones foresaw agreement are:

- Extending free childcare to 30 hours per week, ensuring equality of coverage in terms of geography and language provision.
- Creating at least 100,000 new all-age apprenticeships.
- Establishing a National Infrastructure Commission and a Welsh Development Bank.
- Establishing a New Treatments Fund in the NHS to ensure consistent availability of pioneering treatments across Wales; and recruiting and training new GPs (but without a commitment to a specific number).
- Conducting a Parliamentary Review of Health and Social Care services.

The following day, Mr Jones published a 'Progressive Agreement' with Kirsty Williams AM (Liberal Democrat) as she was invited to join the Cabinet. This included:

- Health – extending the [Nurse Staffing Levels Act](#) and ending “mental health discrimination”. (Cytûn is not certain of the meaning of the last phrase).
- Housing – 20,000 extra affordable homes and a new 'Rent to Own' model.
- Finance - A funding floor for local government settlements.
- Agriculture – A small grants scheme in the rural development plan.
- Education – reducing infant class sizes to a maximum of 25, and maintaining the higher education budget in light of the forthcoming [Diamond Review](#) of HE funding.

## **THE QUEEN'S SPEECH**

Amongst the measures in the Speech on May 18 which are relevant to Wales are:



- Digital Economy Bill, giving a statutory right to each home to receive at least 10Mbps of broadband (a matter raised in [Cytûn's election video](#) on rural life), and restricting access to pornographic websites. It will also give public authorities additional powers to share information, e.g. about debtors.
- Modern Transport Bill, promoting driverless vehicles.
- Better Markets Bill, making it easier to change energy suppliers and banks. The Bill relates to Wales only in those areas which are not devolved.
- Prison and Courts Reform Bill, giving greater freedom to Prison Governors, improving educational and mental health provision in prisons, and modernising the courts through use of digital technology.
- Soft drinks industry levy. The Bill will not specify how proceeds are to be spent in Wales.
- British Bill of Rights. The UK Government promises to consult fully with the Welsh Government and the public before introducing the measure, which will be based on the European convention on Human Rights and the “common law” of England and Wales.
- Counter-Extremism and Safeguarding Bill, strengthening the DBS and protecting children in “intensive unregulated education settings”. The meaning of this remains unclear. Cytûn has already responded to the Welsh Government’s consultation on this topic, and will continue to monitor the situation carefully.
- Bills changing aspects of legislation regarding Pensions, Lifetime Savings and the Gift Aid scheme for charities.
- Criminal Finances Bill, tackling concealment of proceeds of crime and tax evasion.
- Cultural Property (Armed Conflicts) Bill. This will enable the UK to ratify the Hague Convention regarding protection of cultural property during warfare. As culture is devolved, the National Assembly for Wales will need to consent.
- It was also promised to secure the ‘long-term future’ of the UK’s nuclear weapons capability.

The UK Government says that the Neighbourhood Planning and Infrastructure Bill will apply to Wales, but Cytûn believes that this would be conditional on the consent of the National Assembly. As the Fourth Assembly passed a Planning Act and Carwyn Jones’s statement includes establishing an Infrastructure Commission for Wales, this may prove controversial.

Assembly consent will be required to implement in Wales the proposed measure to charge overseas visitors who use the National Health Service.

The parts of the Children and Social Work bill which relate to streamlining the adoption of children will be introduced in co-operation with the Welsh Government.

It will be for the Assembly to decide whether Wales will participate in the proposed National Citizen Service.

## **IMPLEMENTING LAWS FROM THE FOURTH ASSEMBLY**

During the election period, on 1st April 2016, two of the Fourth Assembly's most significant laws came into effect.

The [Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#) introduces new arrangements for assessing and providing social care throughout Wales, including new arrangements for the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. Any organisation which has a formal arrangement with a local authority to provide social services will be covered by the provisions of the Act, and anyone who receives services or is a carer for such a person will in future be assessed under the Act. The Care Council for Wales maintains a [Hub on the web](#) which provides all the information required to understand and use the Act.

The [Well-Being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) is designed to revolutionise the thinking in Welsh public services, with each policy being decided in the light of the interests of future generations as well as the present generation. These changes are just beginning, with the establishing of Public Service Boards in each local authority area to co-ordinate public services, and the new Welsh Ministers will be responsible for implementing the new way of working nationally.

The Future Generations Commissioner, Sophie Howe, is responsible for monitoring all this. She is keen to meet with people concerned with future generations in their area, and is arranging a number of sessions for that purpose. If you would like to attend, please contact the Commissioner by e-mailing [contactus@futuregenerations.wales](mailto:contactus@futuregenerations.wales) indicating which session is most convenient for you, and whether you would prefer to contribute in Welsh or English. We understand that places are limited!

- Mid Wales: 25 May, 2.00 – 4.00, Morlan Community Centre, Aberystwyth
- North East Wales: 14 June 2.00 - 4.00 Glyndŵr University, Wrexham
- South West Wales: 30 June (date and venue TBC)
- South East Wales: 4 July (date and venue TBC)
- North West Wales: 13 July (date and venue TBC)

Alongside these, the [Planning \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) creates a new framework for preparing development plans, including a new National Development Framework. The [Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016](#) incorporates into the law the principle of managing natural resources in a sustainable way. It introduces a new duty with regard to biodiversity and ecosystems, sets statutory targets and budgets for carbon emissions, and creates a new marine licensing system. It also includes powers regarding fisheries and waste management. An explanation of the relationships between these various pieces of legislation can be found [here](#). Implementing them will be a substantial task for public authorities in Wales. The Labour Party's manifesto promised that during the Fifth Assembly there would be a reorganisation of Local Government – which has a crucial role in this legislative framework – but there was no mention of this being included in Carwyn Jones's initial programme.

## MINISTERS IN THE NEW WELSH GOVERNMENT

**Ken Skates** - Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure

**Vaughan Gething** - Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport

**Mark Drakeford** - Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government

**Kirsty Williams** (Liberal Democrat, not pictured) - Cabinet Secretary for Education

**Lesley Griffiths** - Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs

**Carl Sargeant** - Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children

**Jane Hutt** - Leader of the House and Chief Whip

**Julie James** - Minister for Skills and Science

**Alun Davies** - Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language

**Rebecca Evans** - Minister for Social Services and Public Health



## HOUSING JUSTICE CYMRU LAUNCHED DURING DIAMOND JUBILEE YEAR

The Board of Directors of Christian charity Housing Justice has announced the expansion of its work to create a separate organisation for Wales, named Housing Justice Cymru under the leadership of its first Director, Sharon Lee. Housing Justice has sought over the last 60 years to be a 'rallying point' for the church as it responds to the growing need of housing and homelessness.

Looking at developing links across Wales, Mrs Lee will be responsible for supporting churches in a number of different ways, including through practical and joined up responses to homelessness and housing need. Housing Justice will continue to be an independent voice, seeking positive dialogue and relationship with national and local Government in Wales and England in addressing these issues

A formal launch event in Wales later in the year is being planned, which it is hoped will be attended by leading Government Ministers, Church Leaders and stakeholders.

Welcoming her appointment as Director of Housing Justice Cymru, Sharon Lee said: "It is a privilege to be formally appointed as the first Director of Housing Justice Cymru. Churches and Christian organisations are a key part of the solution to housing need in Wales. I'm looking forward to supporting this work and helping the church forge closer links with the housing sector. Housing Justice Cymru will be a strong Christian voice in campaigning for an end to homelessness and a lack of decent affordable housing."

The Chair of the Board and Bishop of Rochester, The Rt Revd James Langstaff also added: "These are exciting times for Housing Justice as an organisation which continues to grow and develop in its work. The Welsh Assembly and Government have significant autonomy on housing matters, and it is important that Housing Justice now has its own organisation to engage with this in Wales. Sharon Lee has already made a significant contribution to the work of Housing Justice and I look forward to seeing that continue in her new role. I will be writing to the Archbishop of Wales and other Welsh church leaders to commend this development, asking them to support the work of Housing Justice Cymru."



## BBC CHARTER RENEWAL

The UK Government has announced its intention to renew the BBC's Royal Charter for a period of 11 years from 2017, with the licence fee rising in line with inflation until at least 2021-22, and being extended to cover the use of iPlayer in addition to watching programmes live.

The Government document, [A BBC for the future: a broadcaster of distinction](#) responds positively to a number of proposals put forward by Cytûn in our response to the Government's consultation document last year:

- Changing the current 'public purpose' statement which refers to the UK's nations and regions by saying that the BBC's role is *representing the UK, its nations, regions and communities* to read instead *reflecting, representing and serving the diverse communities of all the UK's nations and regions*. We believe that adding the word "serving" captures better what we believe is the BBC's duty to make provision to meet the needs of Wales (pp 30-31).
- Increasing the number of network programmes commissioned from Wales, and giving more freedom to BBC Wales regarding commissioning, as well as ensuring that more network programmes produced in Wales reflect life in Wales (p. 44).
- Expanding BBC services specifically for Wales, including digital provision as well as radio and television (pp 44-5).
- Reviewing the balance between news presented from the perspective of Wales and news sourced from the wider BBC. The BBC has already promised a new Wales home page for its web-based news services (p. 44).
- Recognition of the role of the BBC in supporting minority languages, and confirmation of that provision (p. 45), although there is no commitment to increased resources for S4C or Radio Cymru. There will be a review of the work of S4C and its partnership with the BBC during 2017 (pp 59, 97) with the intention of a period of "certainty" following with regard to funding the channel.
- There will be a designated member for Wales on the new BBC Board, and the BBC will be more accountable to the Assembly by laying its annual report before the Assembly and appearing before Assembly committees, and the Welsh Government will have a formal role in the next Charter review (p. 59).

Immediately following the publication of the Government's report, BBC Radio Cymru announced plans for expanding its web presence, including an experimental "second station" broadcasting in Welsh for a limited period.

## POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS

In the 'other' election on May 5, three new Commissioners were elected, and Alun Michael (Labour) was re-elected as [Commissioner for South Wales Police](#).

The new Commissioners are:

- Dafydd Llywelyn (Plaid Cymru) – [Dyfed-Powys Police](#)
- Arfon Jones (Plaid Cymru) – [North Wales Police](#)
- Jeff Cuthbert (Llafur) – [Gwent Police](#)

Plaid Cymru's manifesto for these elections can be read [here](#). Plaid Cymru wishes to see policing devolved to the National Assembly and abolish the role of the Commissioners. Welsh Labour did not publish a party manifesto, each candidate publishing their personal priorities, and those of the successful Labour candidates can be read on their websites.

## LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE ASSEMBLY

The Outreach team at the Assembly are available to come and speak to groups – including church groups - about the Assembly and how it is possible for you to become involved in the work of the Assembly. You can contact the team by phone on 0300 200 6573 or 07971 316 256 or by e-mail at [Caryl-Mai.Hughes@assembly.wales](mailto:Caryl-Mai.Hughes@assembly.wales)

It is possible to find out who your Assembly Members are by inputting your postcode or clicking on your area on the map here: <http://www.assembly.wales/en/memhome/Pages/memhome.aspx> Once you have clicked on a name the contact details for that Member will appear.

The National Assembly's Research Service has prepared [Key Issues for the Fifth Assembly](#) (PDF, 13.6MB). It sets out a selection of key issues likely to matter over the next five years: from the steel industry to the future of Welsh law-making. They have also prepared reading lists on a variety of topics, which can be accessed [here](#). Although the Research Service works for Assembly Members, the public can read all their publications online, and you can subscribe to their blog [here](#). All materials are produced bilingually.

## A QUESTION OF EUROPE

What will motivate us when we make our once-in-a-generation decision on 23 June regarding membership of the European Union? Will we worry about losing markets in Europe, or yearn to throw off the bureaucracy which seems such a burden, especially on small business? Will we count the cost of the UK's contribution to the common pot or in terms of Wales's receipt of more than it puts in? Do we appreciate common standards and free movement, or do we fear uncontrolled immigration and loss of identity? Is the EU a superstate or a peaceful family living in our common European home?

The debate so far has been full of myths, misleading statements and mutual accusations. It is important that Christians consider prayerfully and carefully which values, fears and ambitions should influence our vote and the future of our neighbours and future generations. That is why the Church in Wales, in partnership with Cytûn, is arranging public meetings to raise the issues and ask questions in a way which enables exploration of the issues and consideration of what we can do about them. On **Thursday June 7 at 7.30pm** in St Mary's Priory Church, Abergavenny, Baroness Shirley Williams will speak and answer questions. Further meetings will be held in Swansea and Llandudno.

On Cytûn's website, <http://www.cytun.org.uk/referendum.html> there can be found a host of links to web resources for the referendum by Christian organisations and other organisations in Wales and impartial informative sites.



## CONTACTING THE CYTÛN POLICY OFFICER

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

Cytûn - Eglwysi 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](https://twitter.com/CytunNew)



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