

Minutes of the Cross-Party Group on Faith meeting

Faith and the Pandemic: The Impact of Covid-19 on Faith Communities

Wednesday 25 November 2020 from 12.00 – 13.15 via Zoom

Present:

1. Adrian Allabarton
2. Ainsley Griffiths, Church in Wales
3. Alaa Khundakji, Muslim Council of Wales (Speaker)
4. Alan Lansdown
5. Angela Keller, Wales Adviser for the Catholic Church
6. Beverley Smith
7. Brian Reardon, Church in Wales
8. Carol Wardman, Church in Wales
9. Carys Mosely
10. Curtis Shea, Office of Darren Millar MS
11. Darren Millar AS (Chair)
12. David Emery, Salvation Army
13. Fred Till
14. Gethin Rhys
15. Jim Stewart (secretary and note taker)
16. John Kay
17. Joshua Chohan, Office of Suzy Davies MS
18. Julian Richards, New Wine Cymru (Speaker)
19. Mark Isherwood MS
20. Mark Simpson
21. Moawia Bin-Sufyan
22. Peredur Owen Griffiths, Cytûn
23. Rachel Hosgood
24. Ralph Upton
25. Rheinallt Thomas
26. Ryland Doyle
27. Sian Rees, Evangelical Alliance Wales
28. Simon Lloyd, Chief Executive of the Representative Body of the Church in Wales
29. Simon Plant
30. Siva Sivapalan, Sri Lankan community / Hindu Council of Wales
31. Wynne Roberts, NHS chaplain

Apologies:

1. Andrew Misell, CEO of Alcohol Concern
2. Colin Heyman, member of the Jewish community
3. Dai Lloyd AS
4. Kate McColgan, Chair of the Interfaith Council of Wales and member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints community

5. Llyr Gruffydd AS
6. Major Peter Harrison, the Armed forces community
7. Stanley Soffa, member of the Jewish community

Minutes:

1. Darren MillarMS opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.
2. Darren updated the group on items of interest since the last meeting took place, held on 30 June 2020.
3. Darren introduced the two speakers, Julian Richards, of New Wine Cymru and Alaa Khundakji of the Muslim Council for Wales, who each spoke for 10 minutes on the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on their respective faith communities (Christian and Muslim)
4. Darren then chaired a Q & A time in which a wide range of issues related to the topic were discussed.
5. The following actions were agreed upon:
 - a. To distribute the links shared by attendees of this meeting to the wider Cross-Party Group on Faith mailing list.
 - b. To write to the Welsh Government, highlighting that faith communities often rely on a number of people to prepare and edit online services (rather than having a dedicated person) and asking if this can be reflected in future Covid-19 related guidance.
 - c. To write to the Welsh Government to request the publication of evidence relating to the risk of transmission of the coronavirus from attendance at places of worship and singing.
 - d. To write to the Welsh Government, highlighting faith groups' anticipated need to provide bereavement and counselling services as the fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic begins to settle, and asking if there will be any resources available for this.
 - e. To write to the Welsh Government, highlighting that faith communities have been restricted in being able to raise income during festivals and normal services during the pandemic. Much of this would have gone towards providing services, demand for which has increased.

6. Darren closed the meeting.