

Minutes of the Cross-Party Group on Faith meeting

**A Welcome in the Hillside: Faith Groups and Immigration**

Wednesday 26 June 2019 from 12.00 – 13.15 in the Media Briefing Room, Senedd, National Assembly for Wales

**Present:**

1. Ahmed Alsisi
2. Aled Edwards, Cytûn (Speaker)
3. Arfon Jones, Gobaith i Gymru
4. Carol Wardman, Church in Wales
5. Caroline Jones AM, National Assembly for Wales
6. Colin Harris, Cardiff Watch
7. Curtis Shea, Office of Darren Millar AM
8. Darren Millar AM, National Assembly for Wales (Chair)
9. David Emery, Salvation Army
10. David Forward, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
11. Jim Stewart (Secretary and note-taker)
12. Katie McColgan, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
13. Mavis Harris, Cardiff Watch
14. Mohammad Asghar AM, National Assembly for Wales
15. Naran Patel, Hindu Council of Wales
16. Omer Williams, Welsh Government (observer)
17. Peredur Owen Griffiths, Cytûn
18. Ralph Upton, Gweini, Blaen y Cwm Chapel
19. Shereen Williams, Muslim Chaplain (University of South Wales)
20. Siva Sivapalan, Sri Lankan community / Hindu Council of Wales
21. Stanley Soffa, Jewish community

**Apologies:**

1. Ainsley Griffiths, Church in Wales
2. Bishop June Osbourne, Church in Wales
3. Carl Gidney, Tredegarville Baptist Church
4. Christine Abbas, Baha'i community
5. Father Sebastian Jones, University Catholic Chaplain
6. Helen Mary Jones AM, National Assembly for Wales
7. Jennifer Lenczner, Home Office Prevent Education Officer
8. Jenny Rathbone AM, National Assembly for Wales
9. Lisa Gerson, Jewish community
10. Llyr Gruffydd AC, Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
11. Philip Manghan, Catholic Archdiocese of Cardiff
12. Radhika Kadaba, Hindu Council of Wales
13. Rheinallt Thomas, Free Church Council of Wales
14. Saleem Kidwai, Muslim Council of Wales

15. Sally Thomas, United Reformed Church / Cytûn
16. Sharon Lee, Housing Justice
17. Sian Rees, Evangelical Alliance Wales

#### Minutes:

1. Darren Millar AM opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.
2. Darren updated the group on items of interest since the last meeting was held on 9 January 2019.
3. Darren introduced Rev Canon Aled Edwards OBE, who spoke on the subject of **A welcome in the hillsides: faith groups and immigration.**
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 write to the Welsh Government Minister for International Relations and the Welsh language, asking her to use every opportunity to make sure that human rights abuses and the persecution of people on the basis of their faith are raised with representatives of the nations affected whenever opportunities arise.
  - b. To write to Rhodri Talfan Davies, Director of BBC Cymru Wales, to urge BBC Cymru Wales to portray those seeking asylum and refuge in a way that is representative of the real-life situation on the ground and not in a way which reinforces negative stereotypes.
  - c. To write to the Culture and Communications Committee of the National Assembly for Wales, asking them to be cognisant, as they are conducting their work in different enquiries, of stereotypical and unrepresentative ways in which asylum seekers and refugees are sometimes portrayed in the media.
  - d. To write to the Deputy Minister and Chief Whip, whose responsibilities include faith groups, to ask her what work the Welsh Government is doing in terms of identifying and addressing cultural beliefs and ideas from nations held by those seeking refuge in Wales that are either contrary to British values or that could impact negatively upon community cohesion.
  - e. To email each of the local authorities in Wales, asking them who their resettlement officers are for asylum seekers and refugees so that contact details can be disseminated to Cross-Party Group on Faith members so that faith groups who would like to offer their services in certain local authority areas may do so.

6. An AGM was held in which the following officers were re-elected:
  - a. Darren Millar AM was unanimously re-elected as Chair, having been nominated by Mohammad Asghar AM
  - b. Mohammad Asghar AM was unanimously re-elected as Deputy Chair, having been nominated by Darren Millar AM
  - c. Jim Stewart was unanimously re-elected as Secretary, having been nominated by Darren Millar AM.
7. Darren closed the meeting.