

Cross-Party Group on Faith

Is Wales losing its faith? Reflections on the 2021 census

21 June 2023

12.00 – 13.00 in Ty Hywel, Conference Room A and via Microsoft Teams

Present in person:

1. Alan Lansdown
2. Alun Davies MS
3. Bonnie Williams, Housing Justice Cymru
4. Charlotte Raymond, Darren Millar's Office
5. Colin Harris
6. Darren Millar MS (Chair)
7. Ed Sumner, Laura Ann Jones's Office
8. Fr Jacob Siemens, Orthodox Church
9. Jack Street
10. Jim Stewart (note-taker)
11. Laura Ann Jones MS
12. Lee Gonzales, Joel James's Office
13. Mabon ap Gwynfor MS
14. Major Peter Harrison, British Army
15. Mark Isherwood MS
16. Mavis Harris
17. Nathan Sadler, Evangelical Alliance
18. Russel George MS
19. Sam Rowlands MS
20. Sion Brynach, Cytun
21. Stanley Soffa, Jewish community
22. Tad Deiniol, Orthodox church
23. The Most Reverend Andrew John (Speaker)
24. Tim Rowlands, Evangelical Alliance

Present online:

1. Ainsley Griffiths, Church in Wales
2. Altaf Hussain MS
3. Andrew Sully
4. Carys Moseley
5. Christine Abbas, Baha'i Council of Wales
6. Donna Graves
7. Elliott Vanstone, Catholic Church

8. Gethin Rhys, Cytun
9. Heather Douglas
10. Janice Jones
11. Judith Leigh
12. Leigh McFarlane
13. Mazin Alfaham
14. Molly Conrad, Catholic Church
15. Rhys ab Owen MS
16. Sasha Perriam, Cytun
17. Stephen Lodwick, British Army
18. Tara Moorcroft, Darren Millar's Office
19. Verity Sterling, Archbishop's Office

Apologies:

1. Andrew Misell, Alcohol Change
2. Fr Sebastian Jones
3. Ingrid Wilson
4. John Hall
5. Karen Evans
6. Kate McColgan
7. Llyr Gruffydd MS
8. Prad Halai
9. Therese Warwick, Catholic Church

Minutes:

1. Darren welcomed everyone to the 41st meeting of the Cross-Party Group on Faith and gave updates, including on correspondence with the Welsh Government in relation to faith tourism.
2. An AGM was held:
 - a. Jim Stewart was appointed as Secretary for the group for the next 12 months, nominated by Darren Millar MS and seconded by Alun Davies MS.
 - b. Darren stepped down as chair and Jim took nominations for Chair for the group for the next 12 months. Darren was appointed as Chair, nominated by Alun Davies AM and seconded by Mabon ap Gwynfor AS
3. Darren introduced the speaker, The Most Reverent Andrew John, Archbishop of Wales, who gave a presentation on the subject 'Is Wales losing its faith? Reflections on the 2021 census.'

In his presentation, the Archbishop highlighted the challenges of secularism, post-modernism and relativism that faith communities faced in Wales. He said that, on one hand, the census data did indicate a drop in people identifying as belonging to faith communities but said that there were encouragements, such as, (1) this trend was not irreversible and (2) there were fresh signs of faith being outwardly articulated in new ways.

4. Darren chaired a discussion time in which attendees responded to points that the Archbishop had made in his presentation and asked questions.
5. Darren closed the meeting and said that the next meeting would be held in the autumn, with the date to be confirmed.