

## Cross Party Group on Women

### Inaugural AGM

Sponsored by Siân Gwenllian MS

10 June 2021

Zoom, 11:30 – 12:30

#### **Attendees:**

*Sian Gwenllian MS*  
*Heledd Fychan MS*  
*Joyce Watson MS*  
*Sioned Williams MS*  
*Prof Laura McAllister, Wales Governance Centre*  
*Catherine Fookes, WEN Wales*  
*Jessica Laimann, WEN Wales*  
*Megan Thomas, Disability Wales*  
*Natasha Davies, Chwarae Teg*  
*Hade Turkmen, Chwarae Teg*  
*Ele Hicks, Diverse Cymru*  
*Lenaine Foster-Bennett, EYST*  
*Mutale Merrill, Bawso*  
*Jordan Brewer, Welsh Women's Aid*  
*Debbie Shaffer, FTWW*  
*Patience Bentu, Race Council Cymru*  
*Jess Blair, ERS Cymru*  
*Nia Thomas, ERS Cymru*  
*Eleri Williams, Office of Future Generation Commissioner*  
*Leigh Ingham, Plan International UK*  
*Rachel Minto, Wales Governance Centre*  
*Jackie Jones, Women in Europe (Wales)*  
*San Leonard, Social Firms Wales*  
*Rayner Rees, Soroptimists*  
*Naomi Williams, Positif*

#### **Apologies:**

*Jane Dodds MS*  
*Mike Hedges MS*  
*Elin Jones MS*  
*Sarah Murphy MS*  
*Carolyn Thomas MS*  
*Cerys Furlong, Chwarae Teg*  
*Sarah Kirkpatrick, Welsh Women's Aid*  
*Davinia-Louise Green, Stonewall Cymru*  
*Eleri Cabbage, Women in Europe (Wales)*  
*Diana Stirbu, London Metropolitan University*  
*Melissa Wood, Equality and Human Rights Commission*  
*Abi Thomas, Plaid Cymru (Carms and Pembs Constituency)*  
*Nancy Cavill, Office of Julie Morgan MS*

1	Welcomes, Apologies – WEN Wales
2	<p><b>Election of Chair and Secretary</b></p> <p><i>Sian Gwenllian was appointed Chair of the CPG.</i>  <i>WEN Wales were appointed Secretary.</i></p>

<p>3</p>	<p><b>Introduction to CPG on Women – Chair</b></p> <p>Sian Gwenllian MS advised that the last meeting of the Fifth Senedd CPG had identified mechanisms for equality and diversity in the Senedd and Local Government as key issues following the Sixth Senedd elections. She suggested that work of the new CPG should focus initially on action needed to ensure a diversity of gender representation at the Senedd and in Local Government. As part of the electoral reform process, increasing the size of the Senedd had to go hand in hand with legally binding quotas to ensure meaningful progress on diverse representation. It was also important to look at proportional representation and alternative voting systems such as Single Transferable Votes (STVs). The CPG’s focus could be opened to wider issues as work on equal and diverse representation progressed.</p> <p>Jess Blair advised that, in order to impact the 2026 elections, legislation would need to be in place by the end of next year (2022). Prof Laura McAllister highlighted that, while timescales were tight, a lot of crucial work had already been completed through the Electoral Reform Committee and Expert Panel.</p> <p>Several comments emphasised the importance of appropriate and timely support mechanisms, such as the Access to Elected Office Fund, job sharing, hybrid attendance at meetings, and a review of mentoring schemes.</p> <p>Jackie Jones emphasised the importance of a holistic approach that also promoted the wider protection of women’s rights in the changing international landscape, e.g. through instruments like CEDAW.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p><b>Purpose of CPG on Women - Chair</b></p> <p>In light of the preceding discussion, the following joint purpose was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) To increase diversity and size of the Senedd and diversity of local government by pushing for electoral reform and quotas, flexible working and robust support mechanisms</li> <li>b) To promote stronger protection of women’s rights</li> </ul>
<p>5</p>	<p><b>Actions – Catherine Fookes</b></p> <p>Catherine Fookes stated that past experience showed that there would be no meaningful change without legally binding quotas. The matter was too important to leave it as a voluntary commitment to be adopted by some parties but not others. With legislative quotas, Wales could lead the way and be a trail blazer in terms of showing the rest of the UK how quotas can be used, and show that Wales can be a</p>



	<p>trail blazer, as we were with the Future Generations Act.</p> <p><b>Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Write to Minister for Social Justice Jane Hutt explaining the CPG's priorities and highlighting the need for quotas – Chair / WEN Wales</li><li>- Push for committee enquiry into quotas once committee portfolios have been confirmed</li><li>- Hear an update from Laura McAllister on modelling research</li><li>- Highlight work of the Diverse 5050 campaign</li><li>- Gather and publish research on diversity quotas used in other countries</li><li>- Hear from other countries and speakers around their experience on using legally binding quotas and best practice for mentorship schemes</li><li>- Research and invite speakers on countries who have used legally binding gender quotas, e.g. Ireland – WEN Wales</li></ul>
6	<p><b>Update from the Women in Europe (Wales) Group – Jackie Jones</b></p> <p>Jackie Jones emphasised the importance of using Wales's voice in relation to CEDAW and the European Women's Lobby. She advised that the EU was currently looking into criminalizing gender based violence and suggested that CPG push for ratification of the Istanbul convention in domestic law.</p> <p>CEDAW had been featured in three party manifestos and it was important to continue lobbying work around that post-election.</p> <p>The UN Commission on Human Rights would appoint a new Special Rapporteur on violence against women this summer.</p> <p>The European Women's Lobby's had held its AGM last week with a focus on the impact of Covid 19 and ending violence against women.</p>
7	<i>Close</i>