

Cross-Party Group Minutes

Meeting Minutes:

Cross Party Group Title:	Peace & Reconciliation
Date of Meeting:	20 th March 2023
Location:	Zoom

In attendance:

Name:	Name:
Mabon ap Gwynfor MS (Chair)	Mererid Hopwood (Secretariat)
Hayley Richards	Jill Evans
Jane Harries	Awel Irene
Sion Edwards (Senedd translator)	Gethin Rhys
Gwyn Williams	Peter Fox MS
Jeff Beatty	Ioan Bellin MS
Sam Swash (Carolyn Thomas MS's office)	Ryland Doyle (Mike Hedges MS's office)
Gwilym	Peter Cutts
Darren Millar MS	Sioned Williams MS

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Apologies:

Name:	Name:
Jane Dodds MS	

Summary of Meeting:

Derbyn Cofnodion a materion yn codi - Minutes and matters arising

Chair noted thanks to Youth Peace Ambassadors for their presentation at the previous meeting & for bringing new hope in a troubled world.

Chair confirmed there had been no responses to the various letters to Minister's/ Committee Chairs & committed to following this up.

Hawlio Heddwch/ Women's Peace Petition

MH summarised the story of the Women's Peace Petition and the celebration of its centenary. MH had visited the Smithsonian (the guardians of the chest & petition) as part of Aberystwyth Universities 150 anniversary. The chest and petition have now been gifted to Wales under the guardianship of the National Library. A centenary celebration will be held at Aberystwyth University on 23rd May to share the story in more detail through authors of a new book on the subject. Academi Heddwch has submitted a funding bid the NLHF to share the story with communities across Wales and the National Library has been funded by WG to conserve, catalogue, digitise and create a searchable transcription interface to preserve petition for future generations.

AI shared Heddwch Nain Mamgu's role in bringing this story to life and the fact that they had already collected over 3000 signatures through local meetings from people determined that the story should promote a new generation of peace activists.

JE explained how a group of researchers had worked to find out more about the story and contribute to the book which will have a pre-launch at the event on 23rd May.

Since the CPG Elin Jones MS made a 90s statement on the Women's Peace Petition which you can access here sat 186 [Plenary 24/05/2023 - Welsh Parliament \(assembly.wales\)](#) & the video clip can be accessed here

<http://www.senedd.tv/Meeting/Clip/f5d3c231-3991-4ded-aeed-bb0a1ee4e55e?inPoint=02:25:00&outPoint=02:30:35>

Chair thanked the sisters of Wales for the development of the peace movement and for bringing this story to inspire a new generation

ACTION: At an appropriate time during the centenary, MaG to lay a Statement of Opinion at the Senedd for other MSs to sign up to.

GR shared information about the 1925 Churches Appeal <https://www.wcia.org.uk/1925-churches-peace-appeal/> and also mentioned the 1928 workers' petition and the 1932 churches' disarmament petition which give Wales an opportunity for a decade of centenary celebrations to revitalise efforts for peace.

It was noted that it was 20 year ago this month since the Iraq war.

Heddwch ar Waith / Dewisiadau Amgen i Filitariaeth

Peace Action Wales/ Alternatives to Militarism

AI updated the group on the JRCT funded Peace Action Wales project to be delivered through a Wales peace movement partnership. The bid was put together by Jill, Rhun, Awel & Brian alongside others in the peace movement. The partnership are working closely with Academi Heddwch Cymru to share information and avoid duplication. Peace Action Wales is a 16 month project which will:

- Produce an interactive map of the footprint of militarism in Wales that people can add to with new information
- Disseminate information on militarism in Wales in an understandable way showing alternatives through non violence
- Form a lobbying network at LA, Senedd and UK Government levels with 300 volunteers to collaborate and lobby for change
- Contribute to Wales as a Nation of Peace with LA's adopting Peace Champions alongside the Armed Forces Champions that already exist.

Chair suggested that elected members support this programme, use the platform and that the lobbying network get in touch if there is anything the CPG can do.

BJ noted that one action would be for the Senedd pension scheme & investments to divest from weapon systems banned by UN Treaties (currently the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty, the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons). All these banned weapon systems share 2 common features:

1. Indiscriminate weapon systems
2. Effect is seen long after the conflict in which they were used Such weapons, as well as inflicting casualties well after the conflict has ended, deny communities access to land after the conflict impacting on farming/infrastructure projects and impoverishing entire communities. The chances for positive reconciliation are set back because communities cannot move forward.

SW confirmed she had tabled a question to the Commission about who is responsible for these decisions & that it is the Pension Fund Trustees.

RD confirmed that MH is one of these Trustees and that he could share the response for information.

Action: MSs from the group to write to those that represent MSs on the Trust with concerns as outlined by BJ above, copying in the Commission, & asking them to raise these issues. BJ to share draft letter with notes

GR outlined churches policy is that don't invest in a company that has 10% or more of their turn over in the arms trade. Investment managers should have this expertise as they are already familiar with divestment from fossil fuels, pornography

Action: MaG, JE & HR to meet to plan how best to effect change on pensions?

Action: HR arrange date for next meeting & invite representative from Mayors for Peace to present/ CND Cymru & Welsh Youth Parliament to attend?

Action: MaG invite Jack Sargeant MS to next meeting to discuss progress with militarism in schools petition actions.

Dyddiad a phwnc y cyfarfod nesaf - Date & topic of next meeting

10.07.23: 11.30am to 12.30pm

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