

Cross-Party Group Minutes

Meeting Minutes:

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

In attendance:

Name:	Name:
Mabon ap Gwynfor (Chair)	Sion Edwards (Translator)
Sam Bannon	Jill Evans
Mererid Hopwood	Awel Irene
Richard Outram	Sam Swash
Brian Jones	Gethin Rhys
Ed Bridges	Bethan Sian Jones

Apologies:

Name:	
Hayley Richards (Secretary)	

Summary of Meeting:

Welcome & Minutes and matters arising

This meeting is not an AGM as planned as there is no Conservative Party representation.

ACTION - An urgent, political meeting is to be planned as to ensure cross-party representation.

Heddwch ar Waith / Peace Action Wales presentation by its coordinator, Sam Bannon

SB outlined the purpose of Heddwch ar Waith (HaW) in that it is an all-Wales lobbying network, born out of CND Cymru and Cymdeithas y Cymod, to increase the capacity for peace and justice campaigning.

He provided a step-by-step guide to the four main themes of Heddwch ar Waith which are:

- To map out the extent of militarism in Wales and to bring this information to the attention of the people of Wales
- To ensure this information is understood amongst elected members and in particular younger people in order to support their active involvement as 'Young Peacemakers'
- To build and manage a lobbying network that will create, at local authority, Senedd, and Westminster level, support for the Heddwch ar Waith / Peace Action Wales programme.
- To work towards Wales becoming a Nation for Peace, with the adaption of Peace Ambassadors within local authorities to counteract the current programme of Armed Forces Champions

These working groups are to be established in an online meeting on 30th of November 2023.

By the end of 16 months, it is hoped that discussions within the Senedd will have begun on what it means for Wales to become a Nation of Peace.

Discussion

- **Peace Champions:**

Peace Champion in place at Carmarthenshire County Council, scope for others at Neath Port Talbot Council and Isle of Anglesey County Council. Potential for Flintshire County Council as well. Work for SB to follow up.

ACTION – After Christmas, Cross-Party Group to send letters to other county councils, informing them of the developments regarding Peace Champions at other county councils.

- Heddwch ar Waith interactive map, charting the extent of militarism in Wales

Discussion on how the Cross-Party Group can supplement the map.

SB asked for information on land owned by the government, who is it let out to, as well as activities on said land. According to MaG, Julie James has collated a list of links to websites with information on land ownership in Wales.

- General discussion on Heddwch ar Waith

MH queried how best to avoid duplication with Academi Heddwch's baseline research, *Wales as a Nation of Peace*. BSJ gave an update on the research. HaW working group advised to read the report upon publication.

AI provided more information in terms of HaW's funding background (Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust) and emphasised the need to look into other sources of money to ensure its sustainability.

JE thanked AI for her vision and work behind establishing HaW. She emphasised the importance of HaW as a sharing space for everyone in the peace movement to raise the movement's profile, with it also being a central resource to coordinate peace-themed activities.

- How to promote Heddwch ar Waith in the Senedd

SB suggested that the Cross-Party Group recirculate materials put out by HaW as well as sharing petitions. Going forward, he emphasised that there will be specific groups formed around lobbying which will encourage the HaW agenda at Senedd level.

- Sources that may be of benefit to SB and Heddwch ar Waith

ACTION – SS to share e-mail list of every councillor in Wales with SB.

ACTION – EB to put SB in contact with the Hiraeth podcast as a potentially interested outlet.

ACTION – Members of the Cross-Party Group represent a variety of groups in Wales. SB to send HaW information to representatives of the Cross-Party Group so that information may be sent through their respective mailing lists.

- AOB

- Cross-Party Group was encouraged to share online petition that calls for the provision of humanitarian aid to Gaza. It has 1,700 signatures to date, but needs 10,000 signatures for it to be considered for a debate in the Senedd. Petition link here:

<https://petitions.senedd.wales/petitions/245909>

- Jill Gogh has been collating a list of events promoting peace and encouraging a ceasefire.

- JE remembers 10 years ago, Church in Wales funding a mobile dental clinic in Gaza. She saw it when she visited Gaza, and there was a Welsh flag on it. She queried what had become of the dental clinic?

- According to GR, the dental clinic was bombed and the Church in Wales never restored the project: <https://www.anglicannews.org/news/2017/06/church-funding-ends-for-gaza-mobile-dental-clinic.aspx>

- Also 10 years ago, JE remembers writing to Edwina Hart about the possibility for Wales to take children from Gaza so that they can receive treatment for injuries in Wales. Hart agreed to the idea, but JE is unsure of what came of it. **ACTION – MaG to write as Cross-Party Group to see whether this is still a possibility.**

- Al-Ahli Hospital bombings, Gaza. **ACTION – MaG to contact the Church in Wales to see what their standpoint on this is.**

Date & topic of next meeting

Urgent meeting to ensure continuation of Cross-Party Group. Senedd members only.