

NJPN North West Justice & Peace E-Bulletin October 2021

The e-bulletin for the North West, linked to the National Justice and Peace Network (NJPN), is produced jointly within the dioceses of Lancaster, Liverpool, Salford, Shrewsbury and Wrexham. Please send diary dates to anneoc980@hotmail.com

FAITH LEADERS SIGN COMMON DECLARATION AHEAD OF COP26

22 September 2021

A declaration signed by leaders of all the UK's major faiths has been released ahead of the COP26 Conference in Glasgow. The document has been signed on behalf of the Scottish Catholic Bishops, by Bishop Brian McGee, Bishop of Argyll and the Isles and President of the Catholic Bishops' Committee for Interreligious dialogue and Sr Isabel Smyth of the Sisters of Notre Dame and Secretary to the Catholic Bishops' Committee for Inter-religious Dialogue:

GLASGOW MULTI-FAITH DECLARATION FOR COP26

Our faith communities are united in caring for human life and the natural world. We share a belief in a hopeful future, as well as an obligation to be responsible in caring for our common home, the Earth.

We recognise the opportunities that COP26 brings in addressing the urgent need for action in limiting the effects of climate change and the critical importance of decisions made in this conference to take forward the agreement made in Paris in 2015.

People have exploited the planet, causing climate change.

We recognise that the burden of loss and damage falls most heavily on people living in poverty, especially women and children.

We acknowledge the commitments made through the Lambeth Declaration in 2015. Now, because of the gravity of our situation, the impact of climate change around the world, and the inequality of its effects we seek to strengthen those commitments.

We commit to respond to this challenge by:

Reflecting deeply in prayer, meditation and worship to discern how to care for the earth and each other, and to encourage our respective communities to do the same.

Making transformational change in our own lives and in the lives of our communities through individual and collective action.

Being advocates for justice by calling on governments, businesses and others who exercise power and influence to put into effect the Paris agreement; to make the transition to a just and green economy a priority; and to commit to science-based targets that are aligned with a healthy, resilient, zero-emissions future.

We remind governments of their commitments made in Paris in 2015 to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees, and of Article 17 of the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights to protect the environment, the biosphere and biodiversity. We call upon them to take the urgent action needed to avert the loss, damage, and forced migration threatened by climate change.

We look to governments to work together and with others to create a positive vision for 2050 where addressing climate change is not just an opportunity to stop burning fossil fuels, but also: to achieve cleaner air and water; to reduce food wastage; to ensure a just and equitable sharing of the earth's resources; and to protect the habitats we share with all other life on whose health we also depend.

Across our doctrinal and political differences, we know that we must change our ways to ensure a quality of life which all can share, and we need to provide hope for people of all ages, everywhere, including future generations. To offer hope in the world we need to have confidence that those in power understand the vital role they have to play at the Glasgow COP26.

Glasgow Multifaith Declaration 20/09/2021

Our collective energy and prayers will be with those working for a successful outcome.

For the full list of signatories go to: <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/43093>

THOUSANDS OF CATHOLICS URGE RISHI SUNAK TO SHOW CLIMATE LEADERSHIP AHEAD OF COP26

CAFOD 22 September 2021: Campaigners have called on Chancellor Rishi Sunak to prevent communities who've done the least to cause the climate crisis from paying the biggest cost.

As Prime Minister Boris Johnson arrived in the United States ahead of the UN General Assembly, representatives from the UK aid agency CAFOD handed in a petition signed by thousands of supporters to HM Treasury in Westminster today..

More than 2,000 people wrote to Mr Sunak urging him to finance the UK's pledge to cut emissions to net zero and to work with other governments on promises to support countries hardest hit by the crisis.

"With COP26 only weeks away, the Chancellor must provide the money needed for the UK to slash its own emissions and persuade other countries to make good on their promises to support people facing the worst impacts of the climate emergency," said Liam Finn, Campaigns Manager at CAFOD. "COP26 isn't going to provide a magic wand to end the climate crisis, but it's a crucial moment for governments to show how they will keep temperature rises below the catastrophic 1.5-degree level and finally meet their financial commitments to countries being hardest hit by the crisis. The UK government, as COP hosts, has a special responsibility to make those promises a reality - but the Chancellor hasn't yet delivered on that."

The call has come with fewer than 50 days left until the UK hosts the COP26 climate talks in Glasgow. Campaigners and diplomats from around the world have raised concerns that the UK government is not doing enough to persuade other countries to come to Glasgow with more ambitious commitments to cut greenhouse gas emissions, or to push for other rich countries support communities already feeling the effects of climate change. They have also asked the Chancellor to work with other finance ministers from the G20 group of rich countries to provide at least \$100 billion each year in 'climate finance' to poorer countries which are being hit hardest by the climate crisis.

Liam Finn said: "Pope Francis has called the fight against the climate crisis 'the greatest leadership opportunity of all', but it's one that the Chancellor has yet to show he's willing to rise to. It's now up to the Chancellor to show whether he's going to play his part at this crucial moment or whether he will duck responsibility and fail to deliver in the run-up to the COP." CAFOD is also asking people to write to the Prime Minister Boris Johnson urging him to put people hardest hit at the heart of COP26 climate talks. <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/43097>

LINKS: Boris Johnson told to get grip of UK climate strategy before Cop26 -

www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/apr/12/boris-johnson-told-to-get-grip-of-uk-climate-strategy-before-cop26

Petition: Urge the Prime Minister to put people hardest hit at the heart of COP26 climate talks -

<https://action.cafod.org.uk/page/73304/petition/1>

ARCHDIOCESE OF BIRMINGHAM DIVESTS FROM FOSSIL FUELS

Caroline Bletso 21 September 2021: The Archdiocese of Birmingham has divested from companies which extract fossil fuels with immediate effect, cementing its commitment to action in the climate emergency. The Archdiocese has changed its policy to exclude investments in any company which derives more than 5% of its revenues from fossil fuels and is joining the ranks of all those who have committed to attaining net-zero carbon emissions by 2030. Divestment in fossil fuels is one of the first steps of many which we will take to ensure that we will not fund the industries which destroy God's creation and impact the poor. We are pleased to be part of the global divestment announcement to be made by the World Council of Churches, the Laudato Si' Movement, Operation Noah, Green Anglicans and GreenFaith on October 25, joining four Catholic dioceses and many other faith organisations from around the world who have announced their commitment to ethical investment.

Fossil fuel divestment is a powerful act of faith that hundreds of religious institutions around the world have taken to respond to the climate emergency. It increases pressure on governments and financial institutions to end financing for the fossil fuel industry. Furthermore, an increasing number of faith investors are investing in solutions to the climate crisis, and providing access to clean, affordable energy, including zero-carbon energy solutions for the 800 million people without access to electricity.

Archbishop Bernard Longley said: "Our commitment to divestment in fossil fuels is a response both to the cry of the earth and of the poor, taking us one step further towards its consolation. We join many other faith organisations who are making the ethical choice to 'shun companies that are harmful to human or social ecology... and to the environment', as Pope Francis calls us to do in the Vatican's manual *Journeying Towards Care For Our Common Home*. To see so many united in this aim gives me great hope for the future."

James Buchanan, Bright Now Campaign Manager at Operation Noah, said: "It is wonderful news that the Archdiocese of Birmingham has taken the significant step of divesting from fossil fuel companies - joining a movement of more than 200 Catholic organisations around the world. As the UK prepares to host the crucial UN climate talks, COP26, later this year, we hope this will inspire more Catholic dioceses and religious orders to divest from fossil fuels and invest in solutions to the climate crisis." <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/43085>

CURBING CLIMATE BREAKDOWN IN TIME

Tim Root 12 August 2021

The 9th August Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change report shows that on all of the current likely greenhouse gas emissions scenarios, by 2040 we would miss the Paris agreement target to limit global heating to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Above 1.5°C, dangerous weather events would increase in frequency and intensity, and at 3°C the intensity would quadruple, compared to 1.5°C. The horrific scenes of Greek wildfires and flooding in China and Western Europe underline the urgency of cutting emissions. A leading scientist responded to the report by saying 'every extra tonne of CO₂ emitted today is pushing us into a minefield of feedback effects tomorrow'. However, Australia's prime minister reacted by saying 'Australia is doing its part', ignoring the fact that it is one of the world's largest coal exporters, and has refused to set a date for getting to net-zero emissions. This indicates the type of obstacle climate campaigners need to surmount.

Last month, the BBC's environment analyst pointed out that for 'the umpteenth time', the G7 had failed to deliver on the promised \$100 billion annual climate finance for developing nations. These setbacks compound the appalling revelation that between January 2020 and March 2021 the G7 nations committed \$189bn to support oil, coal and gas, compared to only \$147bn on clean energy.

The G7 debacle also included a failure to provide more Covid vaccine to developing nations. All these factors cast a huge cloud over prospects for the UN climate conference COP26 this November, having severely eroded the trust needed to make progress there. Most developing nations will not prioritise climate over short-term economic gains if they cannot trust that developed countries will do so.

COP26 – WILL GOVERNMENTS SUCCEED AT LAST?

The prospects for COP26, as with all these annual COPs, were poor long before it was postponed by the pandemic. Author David Wallace-Wells said of the 2019 COP25 that its failure could be predicted 'months away — if not years or decades'. At the opening of COP25 the UN Secretary General said 'The point of no return is no longer on the horizon. It is in sight and hurtling towards us'. There have been many similar warnings, including that back in 2014 by Mark Carney, bank of England governor, that fossil fuel assets were likely to become 'stranded'. However, governments are so dysfunctional that such warnings are not enough to prompt the comprehensive action we need. Typical governments, which look no further ahead than their next election, are likely to continue to fail on climate breakdown. Even the 2015 COP, hailed as a triumph due to the Paris Agreement, put us on track for temperature rise between 3 and 4°C.

Campaigning for a good outcome at the COP is hampered by the fact that people distrust governments. Therefore it is very hard to get them to believe that campaigning to influence governments positively would be worth the effort. Throughout the EU, when people are asked to score their level of trust in the government out of 10, the average is only 3.9. An international survey found that government is trusted less than business, or NGOs. In view of all the above factors, it is wise for climate campaigns not to put all their hopes and effort into campaigning for the COP. A complementary strategy is also needed.

There are promising signs that the business world is moving to protect the climate, to avoid huge losses as fossil fuel assets lose their value. On 26 May, called 'the most cataclysmic day' so far for the fossil-fuel industry, shareholders at both Exxon and Chevron overcame the opposition of each company's board to get the companies to move towards cutting emissions. Moody's, one of the world's big three credit rating agencies, described this as 'a substantial shift in the landscape for oil companies', making it harder and more costly for them to get credit. In March a group of large investors, brought together by the campaign Share Action, prevailed on HSBC to set a timetable to reduce its fossil fuel investments. In early June 457 investment institutions, controlling a third of all the world's invested funds, called on governments to 'significantly strengthen' their plans to cut carbon emissions in the next decade. Also over seventy Chief Executives from multinationals including Nestle, PepsiCo, and Bayer called on world leaders to make 'bold' specified measures to 'help supercharge the net-zero climate and resilience transition'. In May the International Energy Agency, originally set up by wealthy nations' governments to ensure plentiful energy supply, warned that development of new oil and gas fields must stop this year, and no new petrol/diesel cars should be sold beyond 2035. It also emphasised that switching rapidly to clean energy would boost the economy and cut energy costs.

PUNISH THE CLIMATE-WRECKING BANKS

These concerns will have a strong influence on the banks. The Financial Times recently reported a poll of banks' risk officers, finding that they considered climate the biggest risk facing their bank over the next five years. An important factor in HSBC yielding to shareholder pressure was probably their knowledge of the poll undertaken for the campaign group Market Forces in December 2020. It found that 31% of their customers strongly agree that 'banks should reduce investment in fossil fuel companies or projects', and 14% said they were very likely to consider changing their bank due to HSBC's investments in fossil fuels. The poll found similar results for Barclays' customers.

The banks are vital targets for climate campaigners, with bank credit to the private sector globally being worth 98% of total world output. Hence they have a massive ability to influence companies' carbon footprint. Banks' financial prospects are far from good. A report by the huge consultancy McKinsey describes how they face major losses due to customers' losses caused by the pandemic, and the decline in economic activity, which will probably continue till at least 2024.

Therefore banks need to avoid any growth of customer negativity towards them. Accenture's 2020 global survey found that only 29% of customers trust that their main bank is looking after their financial wellbeing. Banks face competition from digital-only neobanks, with nearly a quarter of people surveyed having a neobank account. This proportion is expected to increase substantially.

Campaigners need to engage closely with bank customers to mobilise pressure on the banks. The prospect of anything close to 10% of customers switching bank will motivate the banks to try and protect their reputation with clear evidence of cutting their financing of high carbon businesses. Switching banks is now easy. Campaigns should organise large number of bank customers to close their accounts, or if they are undecided, to complete a postcard to the bank saying that they will close the account within 3 months if the bank has not committed to speed up its withdrawal from fossil fuels. Photos of large groups of customers outside the bank cutting up their cards would get huge publicity. Targeting one bank at a time in each nation would heighten the pressure on that particular bank, emphasising that it is even worse than its competitors. The time is ripe in the UK to make Barclays the prime target. It is the worst-ranked European bank for supporting fossil fuels, in which it invested \$20 billion in 2020. At its annual meeting in May, only 14% of shareholders voted in favour of aligning its business practices with the Paris Agreement. Already 10 UK student unions have voted to boycott Barclays. Other organisations could join the Barclays campaign and strengthen it considerably. Giving information about ethical banks would help encourage Barclays customers to switch.

CLIMATE CONCERN SPREADING THROUGHOUT SOCIETY

It is also vital for climate campaigns to increase their influence by getting more supporters from across the political spectrum and from different parts of society. Daily Telegraph leader writer Tim Stanley recently warned 'The Earth is in trouble and it's the most important crisis we face ... If we don't act now, an entire way of life will be destroyed'. The Director General of the Confederation of British Industry recently said 'The climate crisis is worsening and currently we're way off track'.

In most countries the media now generally cover climate change as an important issue, and more often. In the UK even the formerly sceptical Daily Express has improved most of its coverage, starting with its 8 February headline 'Join our Green Britain revolution, with its familiar masthead coloured green. This article highlights its poll finding that 66% of adults are 'worried by the state of the planet, climate change and the decline of wildlife and nature'. It called on Boris Johnson to 'show world leadership on the issue' at the G7 and COP 26.

This illustrates that it should be possible for broader campaign coalitions to be nurtured. Such coalitions would show society, and the media, that climate campaigning is now mainstream, and no longer the preserve of radicals. This would have guilty institutions like banks urgently reviewing their business model.

<https://renewal.org.uk/curbing-climate-breakdown-in-time/>

• **Tim Root** is co-ordinator of Muswell Hill & Hornsey Friends of the Earth. This article first appeared as a blog in *Renewal*, a quarterly online journal of policy and politics <https://renewal.org.uk/about/>

UNIVERSAL CREDIT COULD 'WEAR THIN' WARNS CARITAS

Ellen Teague *The Tablet* 22 September 2021

Caritas Social Action Network has co-signed a joint open letter to prime minister Boris Johnson calling on him not to go ahead with the planned £20-a-week cut to Universal Credit.

Caritas Westminster is among the Caritas agencies urging supporters to write to their MPs to voice "deep concern about the £20 cut to Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit that is scheduled for October". They are dismayed that six million families – in the country with the fifth largest economy in the world – will find themselves a crucial £20 a week poorer.

The British Government is planning to cut Universal Credit next month, taking away an uplift that was given to people at the start of the pandemic in March 2020 while the economic impact of that pandemic is still being felt.

A template letter issued by Caritas Westminster warns that the cut will be "taking away £1,040 a year from them, pushing half a million adults and children into serious poverty". It adds that "a lifeline that's left to wear thin and threadbare isn't strong enough to pull families safely through hard times". They would like the £20 to be made permanent and extended to all those receiving benefits. In their work with hundreds of social action projects run by parishes and schools to support those struggling in their local community, they see the hardship facing many people daily. "We want the Government to understand how hard this cut will hit those we work with" she said, "and want them to reverse their decision to take away £20 a week from those on the lowest incomes".

This was echoed by the Ben Gilchrist of Caritas Shrewsbury who told *The Tablet* that "it is vital that the government keep the lifeline' and give families the stability they need." He said that "it is not too late to heed all the warnings from the people we serve and work with and this is a true test of the desire to 'level up' and there is still the opportunity to avoid creating a living standards crisis this autumn." He urged people to sign the 'Keep The Lifeline' petition in order to send a clear message to the Government.

Patrick O'Dowd of Caritas Salford told *The Tablet* he is "gravely concerned" at government plans. He reported that "social security gives stability to families and, as one parent explained to us recently, this uplift has protected her from the worry about choosing whether to pay bills or buy school uniforms for her child." He added that, "as we continue to face the effects of the Covid pandemic on our society, increasing cost of living and potential uncertainty of domestic utility costs like gas, it is essential that the UK Government re-think their plans and maintain this lifeline."

In early September the Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN) co-signed a joint open letter to the Prime Minister calling on him not to go ahead with the planned £20-a-week cut to Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit, due to come into effect on 6 October. With 100 signatory organisations operating at national and community levels in the United Kingdom, the letter represented what is believed to be the largest coalition to date on this issue. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation coordinated the letter and reported that its analysis showed that 413 parliamentary constituencies across Great Britain will see over a third of working-age families with children hit by the planned cut. It also described as "unacceptable" that legacy benefits – such as Employment and Support Allowance, Jobseeker's Allowance and Income Support – continue to be excluded "from this crucial improvement in support, mostly impacting people who are sick, disabled or carers."
<https://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/14523/universal-credit-could-wear-thin-warns-caritas>

'UNCONSCIONABLE' UNIVERSAL CREDIT CUT BREAKS HUMAN RIGHTS LAW, SAYS UN ENVOY

Cutting universal credit by £20 a week is an "unconscionable" move that breaches international human rights law and is likely to trigger an explosion of poverty, the United Nations' poverty envoy has said.

In an excoriating intervention alongside a letter to the UK government, Olivier De Schutter, the UN-appointed rapporteur on extreme poverty, told the Guardian that the withdrawal of the £1,000-a-year uplift from next month was "deliberately retrogressive" and incompatible with Britain's obligation to protect its citizens' rights to an adequate standard of living.

"It's unconscionable at this point in time to remove this benefit," he said, adding the decision to cut universal credit – which was boosted last year to help people get through the pandemic – was based on a "very ill-informed understanding" of its impact on claimants.

"For these people, £20 a week makes a huge difference, and could be the difference between falling into extreme poverty or remaining just above that poverty line ... If the question is one of fiscal consolidation to maintain the public deficit within acceptable levels then you should raise revenues, not cut down on welfare at the expense of people in poverty."

Read the article in full here: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/sep/16/unconscionable-universal-credit-cut-breaks-human-rights-law-says-un-envoy>

YES, SCRAPPING THE UNIVERSAL CREDIT UPLIFT IS A CUT. AND ITS IMPACT WILL BE DEVASTATING

The chancellor should heed warnings from across the country and his own party. This reduction will push struggling families over the edge

Helen Barnard 14 September 2021

Imagine this. It's Tuesday 7th September 2021 and the government is about to announce a tax rise. There has been widespread speculation of unrest on the backbenches and in the Cabinet, but the chancellor and prime minister are determined to press ahead.

However, it isn't a national insurance rise, costing a worker on £20,000 a year £130, £505 for someone on £50,000 and over £1,000 for someone earning £100,000, along with a rise in employer contributions and for those with share dividends.

Instead, it is a tax rise of £1,000 a year targeted solely on those with the lowest incomes in the country—low paid-workers, single parents with babies, disabled people and carers. It won't hit people on higher incomes at all. It will have the severest impact in Yorkshire, the northeast and northwest of England, and the west Midlands.

Can you imagine the uproar that would ensue?

At the moment, that is effectively what the government is planning to do. On 7th October, 5.5m families will see their incomes drop by over £1,000 a year as the cut to Universal Credit comes into force.

The impact will blow out of the water the £100 tax rise they will also experience when the new Health and Social Care Levy kicks in.

This will be the biggest overnight cut to benefits since the Second World War. The government's mantra is that this isn't a cut, it's just an end to a temporary uplift. But potentially millions of those affected have only known the system in its current state (and even with the increase, many were shocked at the low level of support.) In the real world, if it looks like a cut and feels like a cut, then we might as well call it a cut.

While the government argues over semantics, a remarkable range of people and organisations have been lining up to beg ministers to think again. In a joint letter to the PM, 100 leading organisations set out the urgency of keeping the lifeline that has helped so many stay afloat for the last 18 months. Groups representing teachers, doctors, debt advisers, landlords, mental health workers, homelessness experts, food bank volunteers and social workers signed the letter, knowing that they will see first-hand the devastating impacts of the cut on the families and communities they serve.

£20 a week may not sound like much to people on higher incomes, but for some families it is the cost of a weekly food shop. That £20 is the difference between being able to go to the supermarket or facing the humiliation of going to a food bank, depending on charity for the essentials. Many families are now in a state of fear and panic, knowing they're facing a cold, hungry winter, having to choose between giving their kids a nutritious meal or a hot bath; between replacing worn out shoes or a broken kettle.

A leaked official impact assessment of the (much smaller) national insurance increase warned of impacts “on family formation, stability or breakdown as individuals who are currently just about managing financially, will see their disposable income reduce.” The scenario predicted by internal government modelling of the impact of the UC cut has been described as “catastrophic. Homelessness and poverty are likely to rise, and food bank usage will soar. It could be the real disaster of the autumn.” Ministers are braced for a backlash that “will definitely eclipse social care as a political problem.” The Health Foundation has warned that the cut will impact most severely those places with the worst health already, triggering mental illness and widening health inequalities. Which is ironic, given that the government has just announced the creation of a new Office for Health Improvement and Disparities.

The government's defence of the cut tends to focus on jobs, with the prime minister saying recently that decently paid jobs are the solution and people should rely on their own “efforts” instead of Universal Credit. Yet the majority of those likely to be affected are already in working families, and Universal Credit was expressly designed (by a Conservative-led government) to help people into work and then support them to increase their earnings.

So far, the UK's labour market seems to be bouncing back well, which is excellent news, but doesn't change the case for keeping the lifeline. After all, despite record employment, four million workers were trapped in poverty pre-pandemic. In the most recent Queen's Speech the government decided not to go ahead with a long-promised Employment Bill which could have helped create more of the decent jobs the prime minister wants to see. And frankly, it borders on insulting to justify this cut by suggesting that low-paid care workers, nurses and supermarket staff should just work harder. Or that the exhausted single parent who has been up all night with a baby, or the person caring for a severely disabled loved one, can somehow make up for an enormous drop in their income by “working harder.”

Thérèse Coffey, the current secretary of state for work and pensions, suggested this week that people could make up the lost income by working two more hours a week. She appeared unaware of the most basic features of the system she runs—that most people on Universal Credit keep only 37p in every extra £1 they earn, falling to 25.2p if they make enough to pay income tax and National Insurance (and down to 24.7p next April, when National Insurance rises). Someone earning the National Living Wage (£8.91 per hour if they're over 23) would have to work an extra nine hours a week to make it up—more than that if they also have to pay for extra childcare and travel.

The government won the Health and Social Care Levy vote easily in the end, but five Conservative MPs rebelled and 39 abstained. Red Wall Tory MPs are already facing a backlash over the plan, but this will be dwarfed if the government presses ahead with the Universal Credit cut. The leading Conservative metro mayor Andy Street has spoken out over the impact of the reduction and outlined the steps he is taking to mitigate the suffering it will cause. Around 50 Conservatives have publicly expressed their opposition or nervousness about the effects, including six former Conservative secretaries of state for work and pensions.

The level of disquiet is hardly surprising, given that over 400 constituencies, including 191 with Conservative MPs, will see more than a third of working-age families with children hit. That includes 53 which were newly won for the Conservatives at the last election. The numbers affected are far higher in some places. I wouldn't want to be the Conservative MP for Peterborough, trying to explain why I support an enormous cut to the incomes of nearly two thirds of families with children in my constituency. Or the MP for Burnley, having to justify a cut to the incomes of nearly six in ten families on my patch.

The government came to power on the promise of “levelling up” those parts of the country which have been left behind. But cutting Universal Credit is the essence of “levelling down”—sucking money out of local economies that most need a strong and speedy recovery. The question now is whether all those on the Conservative benches who recognise the damage this cut will do can persuade an increasingly isolated chancellor and PM to see sense—and change course before it takes effect in October.

• **Helen Barnard** is Deputy Director of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Research and Policy Director of Pro Bono Economics

<https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/economics-and-finance/scrapping-universal-credit-uplift-is-a-cut-therese-coffey-poverty-welfare>

NJPN BLOG: CHALLENGE POVERTY WEEK - COMMUNITIES AFTER COVID

Niall Cooper, Director of Church Action on Poverty 14 September 2021: Challenge Poverty Week (11-17 October in England and Wales, a week earlier in Scotland) aims to build active support for solutions to poverty across the UK. It is an opportunity for a wide range of organisations to put on events and activities to celebrate ongoing work to challenge poverty in order to increase support to solve poverty, understand it and take action together.

As Pope Francis has said in his message for the World Day of the Poor (later in November): "How can we give a tangible response to the millions of people in poverty who frequently encounter only indifference, if not resentment? What path of justice must be followed so that social inequalities can be overcome and human dignity, so often trampled upon, can be restored?"

In 2020, over 30 events took place during the first Challenge Poverty Week in England and Wales, inspired by similar Weeks in Scotland and London. These brought people together to speak up, share collective wisdom, resolve and ingenuity with a view to ending UK poverty. Notably, there was crucial discussion on the links between poverty, race, gender, class, sexuality and region, looking at interconnected inequalities. Challenge Poverty Week 2021 seeks to add to the growing movement to end UK poverty, helping to work towards a position where "more people want to solve poverty, understand it and take action."

The overarching theme for 2021 is community after Covid. What needs to change as we emerge from the pandemic, whose voices need to be heard, and what more we can do to build a more just and compassionate society together? As we look beyond Covid, how can the voices of people living with and challenging poverty be more audible and prominent in public debate?

We hope the Week will provide an opportunity for organisations responding to need in local neighbourhoods to become more vocal about the underlying causes of poverty and solutions. We encourage participating organisations to work with groups that have direct experience of the way poverty links to race, gender, sexuality and regional inequalities.

Challenge Poverty Week is an opportunity for local parishes, SVP, Justice and Peace Groups etc to join with other groups around the country by putting on an event and activity of your own during the Week to celebrate what is being done to challenge poverty locally, and to talk about what needs to be done to build a more just and compassionate society in the longer term. Events can be online or in person, and can include anything from inviting your local MP or Councillors to visit a local project, through more creative activities, whether that is through poetry, craftivism to sharing simple images and messages on social media affirming our own commitment to Challenging Poverty (using the hashtag [#challengepoverty](#)).

- **Check out the Challenge Poverty Week website** at www.challengepoverty.co.uk for lots of simple ideas and resources to make it easy for you to get involved. <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/43035>

ST MARY'S TO LEAD RESEARCH PROGRAMME ON SURVIVORS OF MODERN SLAVERY

16 September 2021: The Bakhita Centre for Research on Slavery, Exploitation and Abuse at St Mary's University, Twickenham is to undertake innovative research into British survivors of modern slavery experience of support in Britain. The study is one of five announced innovative research projects announced by the Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre (Modern Slavery PEC) from its call for research on survivor support and recovery. The five projects aim to fill gaps in evidence on the best ways to improve the current support system for children and adults with lived experience of modern slavery so that systems are better able to support victims in short and long-term recovery towards fulfilling their full life potential. The research funded in the project aims to cover a range of areas key to improving the policy response in the UK for survivor care, with three projects looking at adults and two at children affected by modern slavery practices. For adults, they include projects on survivors' mental wellbeing, improving support for British nationals and establishing a set of core short and long term outcomes for survivors. For children, they're set to improve participation and outcomes and examine best practice based on the example of the Scottish Guardianship Service.

Speaking of the research Dr Carole Murphy, Acting Director of Bakhita Centre, said: "The support for people who were identified as survivors of modern slavery in the UK was established with the needs of foreign nationals in mind. Although awareness of the plight of British nationals affected by modern slavery has grown in recent years, the specific needs of British Survivors have not been well understood. Our study aims to change that and produce clearer protocols for improved support going forward."

Executive Chair of Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), which funds the research, Professor Christopher Smith, said: "AHRC is committed to bringing marginalised communities into the research process and supporting research that is created, used and valued by all. Through listening to the lived experiences of modern slavery victims, the projects funded as part of this investment will make a vital contribution towards supporting and protecting some of the most vulnerable members of society. These projects are an example of the crucial role that AHRC is paying in tackling contemporary challenges in order to build a better future for all." <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/43055>

The Bakhita Centre for Research on Slavery, Exploitation and Abuse
www.stmarys.ac.uk/research/centres/bakhita/about.aspx

THE CRISIS IN AFGHANISTAN SHOWS WHY ALL PEOPLE SEEKING SANCTUARY NEED HUMANE TREATMENT

If we are to learn from this emerging situation, we must change our whole approach to asylum

Jesuit Refugee Service Blog: Sophie Cartwright 9 September 2021

The people of Afghanistan face catastrophe. There are reports of mass killings, of Taliban fighters going door to door in search of those who have displeased them. People are fleeing for their lives. Large numbers of people are internally displaced. Many, we hear, are trapped at the airport. Many others are desperately trying to get to the airport. Here is the chaos and confusion of a society breaking down, and of women, men, and children forced to desert their home in desperation. It is a powerful reminder of the realities of forced displacement. People in mortal peril cannot pick and choose their route to safety. They cannot wait quietly in a queue, perhaps for years, for their turn to be resettled – a turn that may never come. They have no choice but to reach safety however possible.

These are realities that the government chooses to ignore in its New Plan for Immigration and attendant Nationality and Borders Bill, at the heart of which are a matrix of measures to penalise refugees for how they are able to get to the UK.

First, the Bill would erect major barriers to even accessing the asylum system for anyone who has travelled via another country, or without documents, or who has made an asylum claim that appears to the Home Office to be later than necessary: in these circumstances, the government would declare their claim inadmissible, and expend time and energy trying to get someone else to process the claim. This became government policy in January with the new rules on inadmissibility and is already leaving many asylum claimants in limbo. The Borders Bill would put it into law.

Second, the Bill legislates for continuing to discriminate against refugees on the basis of how they travelled even once the government has recognised that they are a refugee – i.e., that they need international protection, and that the UK government must provide that. It would specifically deny refugees the chance to settle here, keep families apart, and consign refugees to poverty depending on how they got here. As we react with horror and human sympathy to the disintegration of Afghan society, it must be obvious that we should not, must not, treat Afghan refugees like this. And then it should become obvious that we must not treat any refugees like this, that the Borders Bill entails responding to human persons with cruelty, and that its approach to asylum is incompatible with justice or a basic concern for human dignity.

The government has, under great pressure, announced plans to resettle 20,000 Afghan refugees. This step is welcome as far as it goes, but it is a tiny and insufficient step, and spread out over years, despite the self-evident urgency with which Afghans need safe passage and safe haven – this year, we will only resettle 5,000 refugees. It also raises awkward questions in light of this government's proud determination to fortify our shores against those seeking sanctuary. If we plan to resettle 5,000 Afghan refugees this year, what happens to the 5001st? What treatment will Afghans receive in our asylum system? And what does this say about our asylum system as a whole?

JRS UK is among many organisations calling on the government to extend protection to Afghans: to urgently grant protection to all Afghans currently in the asylum system and ensure Afghans making new and fresh claims in the coming months are swiftly granted; to release any Afghans held in immigration detention; not to evict any Afghans from asylum accommodation; not to subject Afghan asylum claimants to 'inadmissibility' procedures. These steps are vital, and basic, as part of a humane response to the situation in Afghanistan. But if we are to learn from the emerging situation of Afghan refugees, we must change our whole approach to asylum. Some of the steps we are calling for represent pauses or cessations on cruelties within our asylum system, at least in part. Our asylum system is in need of reform. As we try to grapple with and understand the situation that many Afghans are now facing, it must be obvious that the destruction of the asylum system driven forward by the Nationality and Borders Bill is not it.

In a crisis that has engulfed an entire society, large numbers of human beings find themselves forced to seek sanctuary, forced to become refugees. This crisis stems from a situation for which the United Kingdom has major responsibility – that indeed, calls our society to urgent self-reflection on numerous levels. It occurs at the same time as legislation that is cravenly cruel to refugees is going through the UK parliament. The crisis in Afghanistan ought to make us see what we are really doing if we go down the road that legislation proposes. It ought to make us choose another path. It brings home the inhumanity, and sheer folly, of penalising refugees for how they are able to reach a place of sanctuary. It reminds us that, both as a society and as a church, we have a moral duty to welcome refugees, to build bridges for them, and to extend protection to them wherever possible. And that requires a fundamental change of direction.

• **Sophie Cartwright** is Senior Policy Officer at JRS UK.
This blog was originally published in *The Tablet* in September 2021

Read more about the government's Nationality and Borders Bill, and New Plan for Immigration, and learn how you can take action: <https://www.jrsuk.net/new-plan-for-immigration-resources/>

• **The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS)** is an international Catholic organisation, at work in over 50 countries around the world with a mission to accompany, serve and advocate for the rights of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons. You can support the Jesuit Refugee Service and find out more about its work at <https://www.jrsuk.net/>

REFUGEE WEEK: OCTOBER EVENTS AND MORE

Refugee Week and Platforma Monthly Meets are back! Join us on Thursday 7 October for 'ESOL and The Arts' to explore how creative approaches can help people learn English. These Monthly Meets are free, friendly online meet-ups on the first Thursday of every month, for people interested in arts, culture and social change to share learning and expand their networks. https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/monthlymeet-esol-and-the-arts-tickets-148928857221?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=october_events_more&utm_term=2021-09-22

#MONTHLYMEET: ESOL AND THE ARTS

A session for teachers, arts practitioners, charities and anyone interested in ESOL, and will feature presentations from three inspiring ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) and Arts projects, as well as the opportunity for sharing and discussion. This session is also part of Platforma 6 – see below for more!

PLATFORMA 6: ACROSS YORKSHIRE AND ONLINE

The sixth Platforma Festival for the arts by, with and about refugees is coming to Yorkshire in October, with events taking place across the county and online. Produced by Counterpoints Arts in partnership with 20 different organisations, artists and collectives across Yorkshire, Platforma 6 will bring people together to showcase work, develop networks, share practice and learn.

SUITCASES: TELLING TEXTILE TRAVELS BY CONFLICT TEXTILES

1 October, 2pm (online): Opening of the online exhibition and premiere of specially commissioned film – reserve a free place

LAUNCH OF *Suitcases: Telling Textile Travels* by Conflict Textiles, an online exhibition of 23 textile pieces from around the world with a focus on global displacement, both historical and current, its multiple impacts and the experiences of refugees both before and after they arrive and settle in their host country. **A SHORT FILM** will offer an in-depth insight to the textiles. It will bridge the gap between viewing them in an actual physical exhibition and online, in that it will emphasise their three-dimensional, tactile nature and facilitate greater engagement by the viewer.

https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/suitcases-telling-textile-travels-exhibition-launch-film-premiere-tickets-170120343527?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=october_events_more&utm_term=2021-09-22

View the full list of textiles in the exhibition: https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/conflicttextiles/mediafiles/1632_list-textiles-150721-Platforma-Telling-Textile-Travels.pdf

The Story behind Conflict Textiles

Conflict Textiles has its origins in an exhibition *The Art of Survival: International and Irish Quilts* which was held at nine venues across Derry ~ Londonderry in early 2008. This exhibition, which also featured Chilean arpilleras (three dimensional textiles from Latin America, which originated in Chile) was the result of collaboration between Derry City Council Heritage and Museum Services and The Junction with guest curator Roberta Bacic.

4 October, 2pm (online): Guided tour of the exhibition, led by Roberta Bacic – reserve a free place

6 October, 2pm (online) An associated event Conflict Textiles and CAIN: Learning the Language of Textiles, will provide a comprehensive background to the origins, development and mission of the Conflict Textiles physical collection and online archive Webinar registration details.

BROWSE THE FULL PROGRAMME OF EVENTS: https://www.platforma.org.uk/pf_events/

https://www.platforma.org.uk/about/platforma-festival/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=october_events_more&utm_term=2021-09-22

USEFUL RESOURCES

City of Sanctuary has put together a page of useful information and advice on how to help Afghan refugees.

https://cityofsanctuary.org/2021/08/25/how-to-help-afghan-refugees/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=october_events_more&utm_term=2021-09-22

Together with Refugees members are gearing up for a Week of Action from 18-24 October, as MPs return to Parliament after the party conferences. See how your group can get involved here

https://togetherwithrefugees.org.uk/get-involved/show-your-heart/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=october_events_more&utm_term=2021-09-22

Schools of Sanctuary and Together With Refugees have developed a Together With Refugees Schools Activity Pack with some simple ideas for teachers to engage students and get them sending messages to their MPs.

https://schools.cityofsanctuary.org/2021/09/13/schools-involvement-with-together-with-refugees?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=october_events_more&utm_term=2021-09-22

ASYLUM MATTERS WEEK OF ACTION 18-24 OCTOBER

We are calling on all local organisations, grassroots groups and activists to come together for **a week of action to oppose the anti-refugee bill during the week of 18 October**, just as the Bill reaches its next crucial stage in Parliament. By mobilising resistance in towns and cities up and down the country, we can demonstrate that the harmful proposals in the bill do not represent the culture of welcome in our local communities. We are inviting anyone who is interested in organising an event, rally, stall, gathering, or action in their local community to get in touch with the Asylum Matters team! <https://asylummatters.org/about-asylum-matters/our-team/>

Events can take any form, from large rallies or protest events to smaller gatherings bringing together local charities, experts by experience, MPs or other local leaders. It can take the form of a visual stunt or activity for local media, or simply involve setting up a campaigning stall at a local market or high street to inform members of the public about the anti-refugee bill and capture petition signatures or encourage people to write to their MPs. Asylum Matters will be producing resources to support these events, including campaigning placards, badges, stickers, postcards, and social media assets to ensure our partners can take part in campaigning online as well.

Get in touch to learn more! At this stage we want to hear from partners who would like to organise something in their local community as part of the Week of Action. Our team is on hand to support our partners and ensure that events around the country are linked up and presented as part of a single movement for a more compassionate asylum system. We'll also aim to hold a webinar for organisations thinking about organising an event for the Week of Action, to swap ideas and hear from others on their experiences. We'll be in touch in our next update with more details on this; on events already scheduled to take place; and how you can get involved.

Westminster Rally 20 October

Alongside the Week of Action, a Refugees Welcome rally will take place in Parliament Square in London between 4.30-6.30pm on Wednesday 20 October. Refugees and people with lived experience of the asylum system are organising the event, with support from Solidarity With Refugees, Women for Refugee Women and IMIX. All are encouraged to attend. See the Facebook page to register and for further information. <https://www.facebook.com/events/567036321319676/>

PRAYER VIGIL FOR A WELCOMING SOCIETY

3 October – meeting at 2pm

Meeting outside Friends' Meeting House, 6 Mount St, Manchester M2 5NS to walk to St Peter's Square for the vigil

The vigil will focus on praying about the impacts of the Nationality and Borders Bill. It will include sharing stories of lived experience of the asylum system, prayer and moments of silent reflection. The vigil is taking place outside of the Conservative Party Conference, which is meeting 3-6 October in Manchester. It is planned in response to the proposed legislation in the Nationality and Borders Bill, which risks creating an unfair and unjust asylum system. Open to all, and led by Church leaders.

Any questions, please contact: The Joint Public Issues Team – enquiries@jointpublicissues.org.uk

For more information on the Nationality and Borders Bill, go to www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/nationalityandbordersbill

Download a flyer here: <http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Prayer-vigil-on-the-Nationality-and-Borders-Bill.png>

NADHIM ZAHAWI'S DECISIONS WILL AFFECT THE LIFE CHANCES OF MILLIONS

Natalie Perera, Chief Executive of the Education Policy Institute (EPI) 18 September 2021

At a national conference of school and union leaders prior to the reshuffle this week, I was asked how they could best influence politicians and policymakers. The question stumped me. In years past, I would have explained that civil servants and junior ministers at the Department for Education (DfE) are readily willing to engage and elevate the most important issues through to the education secretary.

But, for the past few years, the DfE has rarely been in listening mode. Despite calls from the education sector—and from independent institutes such as mine—to focus on and invest in important issues such as the persistent gap between disadvantaged children and their peers, recent education secretaries have instead been distracted by pet interests. And rather than consult widely, they have closed ranks, engaging mainly with those who share their ideological views.

Now that the controversial Gavin Williamson has been moved on, there is a real opportunity for the new education secretary, Nadhim Zahawi, to rebuild the government's relationship with the education sector and focus on policies that can deliver genuine improvement for children and young people.

There is a trail of post-Covid destruction that the sector is desperately trying to clear up, with little help so far from the government. The latest data shows that pupils in England are, on average, two-three months behind where they would have been in a normal year, with larger gaps for children from poorer backgrounds and in certain parts of the country, such as Yorkshire and the Humber and the northeast.

Yet in response to these gaping inequalities Williamson could only muster an additional £3.1bn over the next three years, which falls significantly short of the £15bn recommended by the government's own education recovery commissioner, Kevan Collins, and led to his resignation back in June. We at the Education Policy Institute found that a £13.5bn funding package would be required to reverse the damage done to pupils' education.

Undeterred and in the midst of the pandemic, when the focus should have been on education recovery and supporting young people's wellbeing, Williamson then issued plans to clamp down on pupils' behaviour, including a total ban on mobile phones in schools. At a time when the education sector needed clear advice from the government on how to operate safely to minimise transmission of the virus, Williamson focused instead on headline-grabbing measures to punish pupils and subject them to further disruption through suspensions and so called "managed moves" between schools. Such an approach only helped to fuel further mistrust among those in the sector.

The new education secretary can initiate a reset. Not only must he prioritise a better package for education recovery in the forthcoming spending review (and he has only a matter of weeks to do it), he will also need to grapple with the knotty issue of how to reinstate confidence in GCSE and A-Level grades, following the soaring increases as a result of the cancellation of formal exams. Indeed, the entire issue of whether exams are needed now that they have had a two-year hiatus is also something the government will come under growing pressure to review.

But an ambition simply to recover from the pandemic will not go far enough. Even before the onset of Covid-19, disadvantaged children in England were already over a year and a half, on average, behind their more affluent peers by the time they sat their GCSEs. Reverting back to 2019 is not sufficient. Zahawi will need to tackle the root causes of inequality. That will require him to work closely with counterparts in government leading on welfare, housing and health policies, because we know that the education system alone cannot fix the problem.

But there are policies, well within the new education secretary's gift, which must now be pursued with a laser-sharp focus. These include better quality and access to early education, continued professional development for teachers, more mental health and wellbeing support in schools and a better deal for young people taking vocational qualifications. Some encouraging reforms to technical education were rolled out on Williamson's watch, but whether they will succeed in narrowing the longstanding academic-vocational divide amid prolonged funding constraints remains to be seen.

Zahawi will have walked into the job this week with quite possibly the biggest in-tray of any recent secretary of state for education. To begin to resolve many of these pressing challenges, he must repair the government's ailing relationship with the education sector, and follow the evidence on what's genuinely needed to support pupils after 18 months of disruption to their learning. The life chances of millions depend on it.

<https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/society-and-culture/nadhim-zahawis-decisions-will-affect-the-life-chances-of-millions-reshuffle-education>

MARCUS RASHFORD TO BE INCLUDED IN GCSE MEDIA STUDIES COURSE

Sally Weale Education correspondent, *The Guardian* 22 September 2021

Marcus Rashford's much-lauded use of social media to pursue his campaign against child food poverty and persuade the UK government to expand free school meals is to be studied by pupils as part of their GCSE media studies course. The Manchester United and England footballer has won plaudits for his social justice campaigns, including tackling racist abuse and launching a book club to improve disadvantaged children's reading, and his use of social media has been key to his ability to spread his message and influence debate. Pupils studying AQA media studies from next September will be able to learn about Rashford's online presence and his communications on social media platforms, and the way in which they have successfully engaged followers. They will also learn more about the social and race issues he cares about.

The move is part of a wider effort by exam boards to diversify their qualifications to make them more relevant to and representative of modern students. AQA has set up an expert group in equality, diversity and inclusion to look at representation across the curriculum and assessments. Sandra Allan, the head of AQA's creative arts curriculum, said the footballer's inclusion on the course would inspire and motivate pupils.

Other new topics, or "close study projects", in the updated curriculum include the Marvel character Black Widow, the Kiss radio breakfast show, Heat magazine and the television series *His Dark Materials*, based on Philip Pullman's novels.

"Marcus Rashford is one of the most influential and inspirational young people in the UK, so students can learn a huge amount from how he uses social media to make a real impact," said Allan. "It's not just an opportunity for them to learn about social media – it's also a great way to learn about important social and race issues as part of our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in the curriculum." Rashford's social media messaging was crucial in his campaign to persuade ministers to provide free school meals for vulnerable pupils in England throughout the school holidays during the pandemic, which prompted a series of embarrassing government U-turns. He has since been described as one of the country's top lobbyists by PR industry leaders. <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2021/sep/22/marcus-rashford-to-be-included-in-gcse-media-studies-course>

MAKING PEACE

2 OCTOBER UN INTERNATIONAL DAY OF NON-VIOLENCE <https://www.un.org/en/observances/non-violence-day>

REFLECT: "What if all Christians were able to see through and resist the myths about violence: the myth that violence is effective; the myth that it is really, when it comes down to it, the only way to protect oneself and be powerful; the myths that power grows out of the barrel of the gun and that violence is the way the West is won. Imagine if the church felt the call to peacemaking in every fibre of its being. Imagine the tsunami of peacemaking practices and witness that would flood the world." Terrence J. Rynne, *Jesus Christ, Peacemaker: A New Theology of Peace*. Orbis Books.

LISTEN: a lovely rendition of *Peace, Perfect Peace* for World Peace Day by the Pimlico Choir at Holy Apostles <https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=peace%20perfect%20peace%20pimlico%20choir&&FORM=VDVXX>

READ: Pax Christi member Heather Kiernan writes: I can see why this poem by Denise Levertov sustains so many peace activists. That voice from the dark speaks for us: "The poets must give us imagination of peace... Peace, not only the absence of war." Those of us who have spent much of our lives resisting war have also longed to go beyond that to be a part of a genuine peace movement. Denise Levertov reminds us that peace is not something that is found but something that is made, constructed out of complex and often unyielding materials. And, because she was a poet as well as a peace activist, she makes a rich connection between those two aspects of her inner life. Peace is like a poem. It does not exist until it is made.

"Making Peace" ~ Denise Levertov

A voice from the dark called out,
 'The poets must give us
imagination of peace, to oust the intense, familiar
imagination of disaster. Peace, not only
the absence of war.'

 But peace, like a poem,
is not there ahead of itself,
can't be imagined before it is made,
can't be known except
in the words of its making,
grammar of justice,
syntax of mutual aid.

 A feeling towards it,
dimly sensing a rhythm, is all we have
until we begin to utter its metaphors,
learning as we speak.

 A line of peace might appear
if we restructured the sentence our lives are making,
revoked its reaffirmation of profit and power,
questioned our needs, allowed
long pauses . . .

 A cadence of peace might balance its weight
on that different fulcrum; peace, a presence,

an energy field more intense than war,
might pulse then,
stanza by stanza into the world,
each act of living
one of its words, each word
a vibration of light—facets
of the forming crystal.

PRAY: Public Prayers in Chester for Climate Justice

It is generally accepted that many of the world's poorest people, who have done the least to cause global warming, are the most likely to suffer from drought, flooding and extreme weather conditions. As Christians concerned with justice, we should come together to pray for all those suffering from climatic changes, and for those in power who need to make decisions necessary to stabilise and protect our climate. In order to raise public awareness of these issues, a small group is planning weekly prayer meetings in public in the centre of Chester over the next couple of months, leading up to the COP26 conference in Glasgow in November. Please join us in this important act of Christian witness in Chester. Meetings will start on Tuesday 3 August at 11.30 am at the Cross in front of St Peter's. After about 15 minutes we will move on to repeat our prayers near the entrance to the Cathedral. For further information please contact Brian Rowe on 07752 949 832.

ONLINE RESOURCE

CAN I LIVE? A DIGITAL PERFORMANCE

Why don't we talk about it? Fehinti Balogun asks this urgent question and offers an invitation in *Can I Live?* a vital new digital performance about the climate catastrophe, sharing his personal journey into the biggest challenge of our times.

Weaving his story with spoken word, rap, theatre, animation and the scientific facts, Fehinti charts a course through the fundamental issues underpinning the emergency, identifying the intimate relationship between the environmental crisis & the global struggle for social justice, and sharing how, as a young Black British man, he has found his place in the climate movement. In the face of a sense of helplessness about the climate catastrophe, *Can I Live?* is an outstretched hand, inviting audiences to recognise they are not alone - and that through understanding the issues and connecting with the many powerful activists around the globe driving change, we can find a sense of hope for the future.

This online filmed performance is produced by Complicité in association with the Barbican, London, supported by Oxford Playhouse. Supported by Arts Council England and Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

Running time 60 mins.

Age: 12+

Access: Captioned & Audio Described performances

Trailers: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nKkB-simOZs&list=PLLEx0tB8K9bQ-q3XszdKnPwY6ygLqdcfS&index=28>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ThJ6tJG4D2U&list=PLLEx0tB8K9bQ-q3XszdKnPwY6ygLqdcfS&index=27>

HOW TO WATCH ONLINE

You can watch *Can I Live?* from anywhere, regardless of which venue's website you book through. Simply choose the dates that suit you best, and go to the website of the venue that is hosting the show online that week to book. You'll be sent simple instructions about how to watch the film on your chosen date from the comfort of your home... or mate's house... or cafe... or wherever you fancy... You can watch the film at any point in the period that the film is with your chosen venue. You will have 48 hours to watch from the moment you click play on the film.

Showing at Manchester HOME Mon 11 - Sun 17 October 2021

WORKSHOPS / TALKS

We will be offering free online workshops and talks for viewers over the course of the digital tour. These will happen at 8.45pm on Thursday online with each venue (Tuesday with Folkestone).

Details of how to book a place on the workshops and talks will be emailed to bookers ahead of each online event.

Book here <https://complicite.ticketco.events/uk/en>

PAY WHAT YOU DECIDE

We have made *Can I Live?* available on a Pay What You Decide basis, because it is a call to action. Long-term sustainable progress on addressing climate change and its impacts will only be possible if all parts of society are engaged, involved and empowered. We want to make the work as accessible to audiences as possible. We invite you to consider your decision about what to pay for your experience of *Can I Live?* as a political decision. Thirty-eight freelance artists and activists were employed by Complicité in making *Can I Live?* By supporting the work generously, you will enable us to connect even more people with brilliant art that inspires change. Pay What You Decide is an extended hand, an invitation: we want you in the room with us, and we trust you to be there on the terms that are right for you.

● **Read NJPN's weekly column** online on Independent Catholic News www.indcatholicnews.com or find articles be uploaded onto our website at www.justice-and-peace.org.uk

● Many items taken from the daily e-bulletin Independent Catholic News www.indcatholicnews.com an invaluable free resources for up-to-date J&P news, events and in-depth articles.

● **Sign up** for regular news and information from NJPN including a **new fortnightly e-bulletin with a comprehensive round-up of current events, campaigns, e-petitions and resources** (plus copies of this newsletter & back issues for NJPN North West) at www.justice-and-peace.org.uk or contact ebulletin@justice-and-peace.org or admin@justice-and-peace.org 020 7901 4864

The views expressed in this bulletin are not necessarily those of NJPN

DIARY DATES

SEPTEMBER

18-25 World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel Theme: 'Forced Displacement of Palestinians'. Prayer cards from Pax Christi – please email: orders@paxchristi.org.uk Cost: £3 per pack of 50 cards plus 50p P&P There are no dates on them, so they can be used throughout the year: <https://paxchristi.org.uk/campaigns/israel-and-palestine/world-week-for-peace-in-pi/>

18–26 Great Big Green Week - a National Week of thousands of events celebrating how communities and groups are taking action to tackle climate change and protect green spaces, and encourage others to get involved too. Everyone is invited. Can you help plan an event or join others locally - <https://greatbiggreenweek.com/>

OCTOBER

2 UN INTERNATIONAL DAY OF NON-VIOLENCE <https://www.un.org/en/observances/non-violence-day>

2 The Cry Of The Poor - Exploring The Encyclical Fratelli Tutti Study Day with Fr Ashley Beck 11.00 to 12.30

Pope Francis issued his encyclical on 'fraternity and social friendship' at the height of the COVID pandemic. At a time of turmoil it is a strident call for global cooperation, solidarity and peace. It was signed in Assisi on 3rd October 2020. Ashley Beck is a priest of the Archdiocese of Southwark, based in the parish of Beckenham in South East London. He is Dean of Studies of the Diaconate formation programme which covers most of southern England, and Associate Professor at St Mary's University, Twickenham. He has degrees from Oxford University in Classics and Theology, and a PhD by publication from Surrey University in the methodology of Catholic Social Teaching. For access to this free live stream event go to www.whatgoodnews.org and follow the instructions. No registration needed. Talks will be available subsequently on www.whatgoodnews.org

3 PRAYER VIGIL FOR A WELCOMING SOCIETY Meeting at 2pm outside Friends' Meeting House, 6 Mount St, Manchester M2 5NS to walk to St Peter's Square for the vigil. The vigil will focus on praying about the impacts of the Nationality and Borders Bill. It will include sharing stories of lived experience of the asylum system, prayer and moments of silent reflection. The vigil is taking place outside of the Conservative Party Conference, which is meeting 3-6 October in Manchester. It is planned in response to the proposed legislation in the Nationality and Borders Bill, which risks creating an unfair and unjust asylum system. Open to all, and led by Church leaders. enquiries@jointpublicissues.org.uk

3 Virtual London Marathon. Ever dreamed of doing the London Marathon, but thought the travel and the distance was too much? How about taking on the Virtual London Marathon for CAFOD? You get the whole day to cover the 26.2 miles (you can even take breaks!) and you can do it wherever you are. You'll even get the t shirt and medal when you finish! **Virtual London Marathon 2021 | CAFOD** – sign up here: <https://cafod.org.uk/Fundraise/Sponsored-challenge-events/Virtual-London-Marathon>

5-10 The Camino to COP - People's walk for the planet - This pilgrimage for climate justice will be in Cumbria between these dates. Join for a day, offer support or find out more at: <https://caminotocop.com/>

10 REVIVE Concert to support refugees 3pm St Vincent's Church Altrincham WA14 2BP. Manchester Philharmonic Winds performing Mozart Serenade No 12 in C Minor K.388 and Dvorak Serenade for Winds in D Minor OP.44, Conducted by Katherine Stonham. Adult ticket £7, under 16 free.

Revive provides on-going and sustained support to assist refugees through the difficult challenges that exile and asylum in the UK can bring. Many who have recently been granted leave to remain in the UK or seeking help on their journey of recovery and growth have found helpful advice at Revive. www.revive-uk.org/a-refugee/

11-17 Challenge Poverty Week England and Wales - an opportunity to highlight the incredible work being done by community groups around the country, and to show what can and must be done differently. It's an opportunity for voices that are often ignored to be heard loud and clear. It's a chance to focus attention on the need to tackle poverty – and to show the immense difference we could make to our society if we do. <https://challengepoverty.co.uk/resources/>

18-24 Week of Action Stand with Refugees & Fight the #AntiRefugeeBill <https://asylumatters.org/2021/09/23/save-the-date-for-a-week-of-action/>

20 Refugees Welcome rally in Parliament Square London between 4.30-6.30pm