

NJPN North West Justice & Peace E-Bulletin May 2022

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

VOCATION FOR JUSTICE: WAR IS A CHOICE, BUT SO IS PEACE

Ellen Teague 4 May 2022

The Summer 2022 issue of the Columban Social Justice newsletter '*Vocation for Justice*' is now available. It takes the theme '*War is a choice, but so is Peace.*'

The Ukrainian invasion is a living theatre of the evils of war and it distresses all humanity. But will it culminate in a new commitment to put an end to war and for humanity to grow up and out of patriarchal empire-building? Will we move to seriously address the climate crisis and the extinction of species - possibly even our own - that we face today. "If we want the world to change, then first our hearts must change" says Pope Francis.

The front cover illustration was lent by the Quakers whose dedication to peacemaking is inspirational. Inward reflection and transformation towards more sustainable peace could be fulfilled by, for instance, mainstreaming peace education across education systems; taking a more systematic approach in consulting grassroots and civil society groups; and adopting a broader spectrum of peace narratives, values and practices.

Columbans know the costs of violence, with 24 Columbans killed violently in their history and Columbans today witnessing brutality in countries such as Myanmar. Columban missionaries are members of Pax Christi International, and peacemaking through nonviolence receives attention in this newsletter.

The centrespread highlights some of the winners in the latest Columban Schools Competition which took the theme, 'Anyone can make a difference: 21st Century Changemakers'. The fifth annual competition, covering Britain and Ireland, with two strands of articles and images, attracted 260 entries from nearly 50 schools. We learnt that young people admire those who have compassion for the wellbeing of others, have a strong moral compass and live their values. They are courageous in their service to others in need, whether that is a person, group, or community, or in advocacy and defence of certain ideals. Usually, they act knowing there is a personal risk and without expectation of reward. Most subjects of winning entries were guided by their faith and many by Catholic Social Teaching, which underlines the dignity of all. Jo Siedlecka was one of the judges and the Columbans thank them and all the teachers are forming young people with a sensitivity and passion about care for people and planet.

As Christians we have to be active peace makers. Let us actively promote the educational efforts of Pax Christi in England, Wales and Scotland and the Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. The Columban JPIC team will be at July's annual conference of the National Justice and Peace Network with its great title, '*Hope! A verb with its sleeves rolled up.*'

Peace was the goal of the United Nations, rising from the ashes of World War II, to prevent future world wars. And UN work includes building peace with the planet, through its Biodiversity and Climate Change Conventions. War, armed conflict and military intervention have significant environmental impacts, often triggering degradation, ecosystem collapse or even ecocide. We urge support of UN action and on page 8 we can see how Columban education in a Birmingham school engaged with the British government delegation at biodiversity talks in Geneva and with Columban representatives from the United States at those talks.

Pope Francis, following Jesus, has been setting the stage for full-on Catholic engagement in this urgent paradigm shift. His visionary 2015 encyclical, '*Laudato Si', on Care for Our Common Home,*' his clarion call for ecological conversion and for a "new post-pandemic normal" point clearly in this direction. In the 2020 encyclical '*Fratelli Tutti*', he said: "Every war leaves our world worse than it was before. War is a failure of politics and of humanity, a shameful capitulation, a stinging defeat before the forces of evil." And the Vatican has given every support to the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative of Pax Christi International.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/44612>

LINKS

Vocation for Justice Summer 2022 Issue:

<https://columbans.co.uk/justice-peace/10095/vocation-for-justice-war-is-a-choice-and-so-is-peace/>

Columban Statement on Peace at:

<https://columbans.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/2015-Columban-Peace-Statement.pdf>

FORCES WATCH: THE NAVY TAKES OVER IN THE CHANNEL

29 April 2022: Dear Supporters,

This month marked a new low for the UK's race to the bottom in protecting the human rights of migrants - refugees or otherwise. On the 14th April, the Home Secretary, Priti Patel, announced plans to send men arriving via boats across The Channel to Rwanda. Once in the central African country, these men will have their asylum claims processed and, if successful, will be granted refugee status there and not in the UK. It is unclear what will happen to those who are not granted asylum. On the same day the Rwanda deal was announced, the Royal Navy finally took over control of policing operations in the English Channel.

The Border is Being Militarised

The Government first announced plans for the Navy to assume command of border patrols in The English Channel back in January. Yet, as we wrote after the announcement, there has been a longer process of military involvement in Border Force operations that stretches back to at least 2019 - alongside the use of old military barracks as migrant detention centres and processing facilities: <https://www.forceswatch.net/comment/pushback-militarising-the-channel/>

This week, Doctors of the World released a report condemning the horrendous conditions faced by people held at Napier Barracks in Folkestone, Kent, where inadequate healthcare and poor accommodation is driving a rise in physical and mental health issues: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/apr/27/unsafe-uk-accommodation-threatens-asylum-seeker-health-doctors-of-the-world-report>

Unsurprisingly, they are not the first to raise such concerns. April also saw the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Immigration Detention, a body of MPs, publish damning findings from their inquiry into Napier back in February: <https://appgdetention.org.uk/napier-barracks-visit-report-published/> Astonishingly, as the Nationality and Borders Bill returns to Parliament, the Home Office is proposing to use other ex-military barracks to hold those arriving across the Channel and hold-up Napier as a model follow.

While we still don't know the full extent of the Navy's border operations, there was some insights to be gleaned from an MoD Tweet on April 14: <https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1514711332544733185> Alongside surveillance, Commodore John Craig claimed that service personnel will aid in the assessment of arrivals at Dover, who will then be taken to a holding area at Kent's Manston Airport before being "passed back to the Home Office for accommodation outside the military bases." Perhaps more worryingly, an unnamed source told The Daily Telegraph that migrants arriving on boats will be met by the Army, who will drive them "to the airport and send [them] straight to Rwanda." <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2022/04/13/channel-migrants-sent-rwanda/> This may be a little far-fetched but it sends a message. We've contacted the journalist who wrote the report to ask for more details but are yet to hear from them.

There is a petition on Change.org calling for the closure of Napier Barracks. Click here if you want to sign: <https://www.change.org/p/pritipatel-ukhomeoffice-close-napier-barracks-now>
<https://www.forceswatch.net/>

BISHOP CRITICAL OF GOVERNMENT PLAN TO SEND SOME ASYLUM SEEKERS TO RWANDA

18 April 2022: Bishop Paul McAleenan, the Lead Bishop for Migrants and Refugees for the Bishops' Conference, has commented on the UK government's plan to send some asylum seekers to Rwanda:

"The proposal to send some of those seeking asylum to Rwanda is at odds with the line from the Prophet Isaiah which we read as we prepare for Easter, *'He does not break the crushed reed nor quench the wavering flame'*. Despite presenting the plan as a humanitarian need to combat trafficking, this scheme will compound the difficulties of those arriving on our shores hoping for a new beginning. The actions of the people of this country show that they wish to lift up those in need, decisions of the government should do likewise.

I am reminded of a memorial plaque on the promenade in Dover honouring those who died at sea seeking refuge. 'Every migrant has a name, a face, a story'. This should be our starting point. We need to make it convenient for them to tell their story [their Asylum claim] remembering we are dealing with individuals made in God's image who have endured great hardships in their own country and on their travels. The UK Government and the whole international community, motivated by the desire to uphold the dignity of human life, need to address the problems which cause people to flee their homes.

We pray for all refugees whose sole aim is to survive each day. Led by the Christian spirit, manifested so powerfully at Easter, we should help and not discourage them."

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/bishop-critical-of-government-plan-to-send-some-asylum-seekers-to-rwanda/>

'ON EASTER SUNDAY I WAS ALONE IN A CELL'

27 April 2022: *Katie Dowds, 28, is a Christian who took part in a Just Stop Oil action on Friday 15th April to demand that the UK government end new oil and gas projects in the UK. Along with two others she was remanded in custody over the following weekend and spent Easter Sunday in a police cell waiting to attend court on Easter Monday. This is the moving statement she read in court:*

Your Honour,

My name is Katie, I'm 28 and I help lead a church in Leeds. Before 1st April I had never been arrested or done anything that might be classed as "criminal"; bar the odd speeding ticket. Rather, I spend the overwhelming amount of my time running therapeutic Christian day centres for those who've been battered and bruised by the storms of addiction, mental health, homelessness and childhood trauma and serving this community is one of my greatest joys and privileges. And yet on Easter Sunday, the most significant day in the Christian calendar, when I should have been feasting and celebrating the resurrection with this beautiful community, I was alone in a cell due to my involvement with the Just Stop Oil Campaign – a group of ordinary people with one no brainer demand: that our government halts all new licences for the exploration, development and production of fossil fuels.

My decision to join Just Stop Oil was not one I took lightly. I am well aware of the potential implications of my actions, not just to my liberty but my future employment prospects and my ability to get a mortgage.

And yet, after reading yet another damning IPCC report outlining the catastrophic consequences of governmental failure to tackle the climate crisis and the unspeakable suffering this will cause to people everywhere, particularly the most poor and vulnerable, I feel I am left with no other choice.

According to the latest IPCC report, we have a "brief and rapidly closing window to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all". The International Energy Agency has said that if governments are serious about the climate crisis, there can be no new investments in fossil fuels from 2021. Yet, despite the overwhelming evidence from the global scientific community of the direct threat the fossil fuel industry poses to humanity, our governments continue to subsidise and grant licences for its expansion, with 42 new extraction projects in the pipeline. This is absolute madness and a reckless gamble with all of our futures.

The UK government is not ignorant of the suffering this will cause, not just to countries with the highest exposure to ecological threat (10 out of 18 of which are listed amongst the 40 least peaceful nations on the Global Peace Index), but to your children, grandchildren and the children I hope to one day have. And yet they act with impunity and continue to prioritise profit and protecting the fossil fuel industry over the preservation of life on earth.

As a British citizen, I therefore believe that the government has broken the social contract and when business as usual equates to mass migration, mass starvation and societal collapse, I can no longer in good conscience comply. Nor, I maintain, should I be punished for speaking out against such injustice and using my body to peacefully disrupt an economic system which bankrolls in death and destruction.

It is usually a criminal offence to break the window of a house without cause. However, if the house is on fire and there are people trapped inside, such actions are not only proportionate but necessary.

Your Honour, our house is on fire and we're doing everything we can to nonviolently sound the alarm to save as many lives as possible.

According to the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres "Climate activists are sometimes portrayed as dangerous radicals. But the truly dangerous radicals are the countries that are increasing production of fossil fuels. Investing in new fossil fuel infrastructure is moral and economic madness." I repeat, Your Honour, that these are the words of the UN Secretary General.

Nonetheless, I do plead guilty to the offence with which I am charged. However, I also humbly suggest that it is not concerned, ordinary citizens like myself who should be appearing in court today, but those who continue to profit from, protect and prop up the fossil fuel industry.

Thank you for your time.

- Katie and the other two activists pleaded guilty to charges of aggravated trespass and they were issued with costs ranging between £150 and £349. On release from court, the three were immediately arrested again for breaching a High Court Injunction and taken back into custody. They were brought before the High Court the following day where it was found that the police had held them for longer than they are allowed to after their second arrest and so had to release them.

<https://christianclimateaction.org/2022/04/27/on-easter-sunday-i-was-alone-in-a-cell/>

JUST STOP OIL IS ONLY THE START OF A WORLDWIDE 'SPRING UPRISING'

Down to Earth: The new era of extreme climate protest - Damien Gayle *The Guardian* 5 May 2022

It's five weeks since I asked in this newsletter whether Just Stop Oil, the climate activist campaign that threatened to shut down the UK's fossil fuel distribution network, could pull it off. Turns out, they could; sort of.

In an April fool's day surprise, supporters of the group, and of Extinction Rebellion, began coordinated blockades at 10 oil terminals across the Midlands and south east of England.

They sat in roads and burrowed beneath them. They mass trespassed into installations in the dead of night, scaling silos and gantries and chaining and locking themselves to key equipment. They were arrested. And they came back. Day after day after day.

Oil terminals are distribution hubs, where oil, petrol, diesel and other petrochemicals are stored before being shipped to retailers. Over the following days and weeks, despite retailers' insistence they had the situation under control, hysteria grew as reports multiplied of pumps running dry on petrol station forecourts.

Police reacted swiftly, finding ways to minimise the impact of protests, but activists nevertheless shut terminals down for extended periods. In an effort to deal with protesters quickly, oil distribution companies obtained injunctions empowering police to arrest anyone protesting near their sites – and beef up the penalty to a potential two years in jail.

Reports of fuel shortages have slowed, but Just Stop Oil has succeeded in thrusting fears of anthropogenic climate change back on to the popular agenda. Tabloid headlines rage at the antics of "eco-zealots" and activists have streamed live to morning talk show panels from oil installation gantries. In a mark of the campaign's popular culture impact, Gary Lineker turned on Richard Madeley for a "bullying and patronising" interview of one young activist on the *Good Morning Britain* couch.

That's not all. In the midst of all that, in the week before Easter Extinction Rebellion brought its carnival of climate protest back to the streets of London. Amid a series of protests, on one sunny spring day, scientists in white lab coats glued their hands to the glass facade of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

"The government's insane, and I don't know what to do, other than to do this, to try and get the attention that we need to wake the public up," Aaron Thierry, an ecologist, told me there.

As those scientists were carried away by police, just a few hundred yards away was Angus Rose, the 52-year-old who sat each day on a folding chair outside parliament, refusing to eat. He said he was willing to die unless Greg Hands, the minister for energy, arranged for Patrick Vallance, the chief scientist, to give a climate change

briefing to all MPs. Rose went 37 days without eating, until his supporters were frantic with worry. He relented when Caroline Lucas, the Green MP, arranged for Vallance to give the briefing via the all-party parliamentary group on climate change. "It is, I suppose, a bit of a compromise. But I couldn't say no to the briefing," Rose told me.

Climate activism is back. And not just in the UK. Around the world, hundreds of scientists took part in Scientists Rebellion, taking direct action against banks, oil companies and governments over the threat from climate change. In Canada, Australia, US, Italy and Germany groups have sprung up imitating Insulate Britain, by picking a single specific demand and blocking roads until it is met, or they are jailed.

And they have some useful allies. Last week a Los Angeles-based philanthropic fund revealed it had donated \$1.3m to groups so far this year to fund a climate activism "spring uprising".

Margaret Klein Salamon, executive director of the Climate Emergency Fund, told the Guardian the donations, which included "hundreds of thousands of dollars" to Just Stop Oil, come mainly from wealthy individuals in the US. Adam McKay, the writer and director of *Don't Look Up*, had donated \$250,000, but many others choose to remain anonymous, she said.

Big donations to activists will always be controversial. But activism needs money. Just Stop Oil organisers have said it costs about £1,000 to keep one of their teams on the road for the week. They have to pay for equipment, travel, food, rent (and even tickets to football matches). Salamon insisted CEF does not pay for any illegal activity. "What we do fund is recruitment, training, organising staff, core staff," she said.

And what it means is that, so long as there are willing activists, actions can continue. On Wednesday, members of XR disrupted the shareholder meetings of Barclays and Standard Chartered, calling on the banks to divest from fossil fuels. The last few Just Stop Oil activists were being removed from the Nustar terminal in Glasgow, the site of their first action in Scotland the day before.

While many bemoan the disruption the protesters are causing, they seem unlikely to let up. Just Stop Oil says its supporters have been arrested more than 1,200 times since the campaign began and the campaign has said it will continue until all its members are sent to jail or the government agrees to a moratorium on new oil and gas projects.

That doesn't seem likely to happen anytime soon. On 1 May, Kwasi Kwarteng, the energy secretary, announced another licensing round for North Sea oil projects.

OPINION: NOT ONLY UKRAINIANS, BUT ALL REFUGEES DESERVE COMPASSION

Nhial Deng, South Sudanese refugee, writer, and community activist 5 April 2022

It has been more than a month since Russia embarked on an all-out invasion of Ukraine. A whole nation has been in despair since troops started moving towards Kyiv on February 24. Entire towns have been destroyed. Tens of thousands have perished. And more than four million people had to flee their homes to seek safety in neighbouring countries.

Day after day we watched tragic, but somewhat familiar, scenes on our screens: mothers running with babies in their arms, families searching for their possessions in the rubble of their homes, thousands of desperate refugees crowding border zones.

But among the footage from Ukraine, there were also some not so familiar scenes: border guards of neighbouring countries welcoming refugees with open arms; citizens hosting Ukrainians in need of accommodation in their own homes; politicians giving speech after speech outlining what they will do to help those fleeing the war; universities offering places to students from Ukraine so they can continue their studies.

I was, of course, pleased to see the world unite to support Ukrainians. As someone who knows the horrors of war all too well, I sympathise and stand in solidarity with all those fleeing Russia's brutal invasion. But like so many people who have had to flee a war, as I watched the Ukrainian refugee crisis unfold, I could not help but ask: Where were these world leaders, corporations and universities when armed invaders attacked and burned my village just 11 years ago? Where were the people of goodwill offering for me to stay with them instead of being stuck in a refugee camp for a decade?

I have known forced displacement and war all my life. I was born and raised in a small village in Ethiopia where my father had settled after fleeing the first Sudanese civil war. When I was young, my father told me countless stories about his life in South Sudan. He told me not only about the beautiful village by the Nile where he spent his childhood, but also about the times he had to run and hide from helicopters dropping bombs.

In 2010, my father's story became my own. My small village in Ethiopia was attacked by armed militias, and I became a refugee. Eleven years later, I am still a refugee. All my family members are still refugees. I am lucky to be living and studying temporarily in Canada, but my family is still stuck in a refugee camp.

The war did not just steal my home and my childhood. It stole my family's future.

How different our lives would be now if the world had responded to my father's cry for help some five decades ago with the same compassion and care it is now offering to Ukrainians? Or 11 years ago, when our village in Ethiopia was attacked?

My family and I are in no way part of an unlucky minority. According to the United Nations, before the beginning of the invasion of Ukraine, there were already an unbelievable 82.4 million forcibly displaced people across the world.

That is, actually, more people than the entire population of Ukraine.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/4/5/not-only-ukrainians-but-all-refugees-deserve-our-compassion>

Heather Kiernan writes: While the eyes of the world have been fixed on Ukraine, other horrors continue to take place. Humanitarian organisations have warned that with attention elsewhere, there is a risk that the cries of millions of marginalised and oppressed people are going unheard.

Christine Allen, the director of Cafod, said: "It is right that we support a response to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine in whatever way we can, but this cannot be at the expense of vital funds meant for tackling the root causes of global poverty. Our sisters and brothers around the world — including in Afghanistan, Syria, and South Sudan — are facing daily the impacts of conflict and food scarcity, as well as climate change and Covid-19."

The United Nations has warned that the situation in Somalia, where 4.5 million people are at risk of starvation owing to the worst drought in a decade, is deteriorating rapidly. If nothing is done, it is projected that, by this summer 350,000 of the 1.4 million severely malnourished children in the country, will perish.

PRAYER FOR OVERCOMING INDIFFERENCE Chaim Stern

For the sin of silence,
For the sin of indifference,
For the secret complicity of the neutral,
For the closing of borders,
For the washing of hands,
For the crime of indifference,
For the sin of silence,
For the closing of borders.

For all that was done,
For all that was not done,
Let there be no forgetfulness before the Throne of
Glory;
Let there be remembrance within the human heart;
And let there at last be forgiveness
When your children, O God,
Are free and at peace

NEWS FROM CAFOD IN LANCASTER

Our focus continues to be on food as we look at our new campaign, Fix the Food System. It is vital we not only deal with the effects of poverty but that we deal with the causes too. Keep reading for more information on our campaign plus other useful snippets of news such as a parish newsletter announcement and more.

Our new campaign: Fix the Food System

We've launched our new campaign, Fix the Food System. The way we produce food isn't working. Giant corporations put profits before people, and most of the 800 million people who don't get enough to eat are small farmers. The global food system is also one of the biggest drivers of climate change. We need ways of producing food that protect people and the planet, and we need your parish to get involved to help bring about change.

Our activity for groups in parishes is called Fix the Food System: a 7 station journey. Based on learning and discussion, the activity suits groups of any size, although 10-30 people would be ideal. It lasts around one hour.

If you are the Campaign Volunteer in your parish you should have received a small pack of resources in the last week or will do this week. There's a leader's guide, and a leaflet for each participant. Please order the number of leaflets you need by visiting the CAFOD online shop: <https://shop.cafod.org.uk/> If you didn't receive a pack in the post, you can order both the guide and the leaflet.

For more information about the campaign, see here: <https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Fix-the-food-system>

And do join us on Weds 11 May at 7pm for an online talk about our campaign. Sign up here:

https://www.bigmarker.com/cafod/Fix-the-Food-System?utm_bmc_source=ebulletin

Update on Ukraine

Thank you for everything you did to raise funds for and awareness of our DEC Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal during Lent and for your continued support for the people affected by the war in Ukraine. We've raised over £2.7 million for the Appeal so far. You can read about how Caritas organisations and other CAFOD partners are responding on our Ukraine humanitarian crisis news webpage: <https://cafod.org.uk/News/Emergencies-news/Ukraine-crisis>

60th Anniversary Mass

Join us to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of CAFOD. We will mark this occasion with a special Mass on Friday 10th June at 12.30pm live streamed from St. George's Cathedral in Southwark, London. Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Stephen Wright from Birmingham. We are pleased to announce that the acclaimed London Community Gospel Choir will be leading the singing. We will joyfully give thanks for our global partner organisations, our volunteers, supporters and staff past and present.

Register to watch here: <https://www.bigmarker.com/cafod/60-Anniversary>

Patrick Gardner & Emma Nolan

Community Participation Coordinators – Lancaster Diocese

CAFOD in Lancaster Tel: 07920 565454 (Patrick) or 07769 931373 (Emma) Email: lancaster@cafod.org.uk

CHESTER WORLD DEVELOPMENT FORUM ANNUAL REPORT MAY 2021 TO APRIL 2022

This has again been a year under the shadow of Covid19. Many Forum and Committee meetings were held via Zoom, but gradually we have moved to face to face Committee meetings and face to face Forum meetings. Our Forum meetings at The Unity Centre also have Zoom facilities for members who are still unsure about attending in person. Throughout the year we have been very conscious that people in Developing countries with limited vaccination have struggled much more than people in western nations. We have also been most concerned about the Climate Crisis and that insufficient action was being taken around the world to maintain temperature rise to 1.5 degrees; consequences are already evident, particularly in Developing countries / global South.

Regular Meetings through the Year

On 13 May we had our AGM via Zoom, and before that Dr Henry Sidsath – a lecturer in Business Studies at the University of Chester - spoke to us about his twin loves: coffee and tree planting. He imports some coffee and ensures that it is ethically produced, and that the farmers get a fair price for production. With money from selling the coffee, he supports tree planting in Malawi, one of the world's least developed countries. Our AGM followed, in which the Annual Report and Financial Report were accepted, and officers and Committee membership agreed. A Government Review of the issue of Nuclear weapons and disarmament was also considered. It was agreed that a letter should be sent to the Foreign Secretary expressing concern about the proposed increase in nuclear weapons, especially following the decrease in Overseas Aid.

We had an extra meeting on 7 June via Zoom when we listened to a most interesting TED Talk on “How Africa Can Keep Rising”. The Director of the World Trade Organisation and former Finance Minister of Nigeria described the positive progress in the continent, and outlined the challenges African nations still needed to address. Although the talk was 4 years old, it was still very meaningful in considering current issues.

Our next Forum Meeting, again on Zoom, was on 13 July when Dr Justin Thacker, a former Director of the campaign group, Church Action for Tax Justice, spoke to us about „Fair Tax Now“ and called for a fairer tax system for all. He particularly focussed on the need for this in Africa, using cobalt extraction in Zambia as an example. The company mining cobalt and exporting it to countries where batteries are made makes large profit by declaring the profit in a country with a low corporate tax rate. A tiny profit is declared in Zambia, which receives little benefit for having the cobalt.

On 14 September, we had our first Covid face to face Forum meeting at the Unity Centre with a talk on “A Year of Summits” by Gill Miller. We also provided a Zoom facility. Gill gave a most interesting overview of the major International Gatherings that had taken place or were still to take place in 2021. These included meetings of G7, G20 and COP26. We were surprised by the large number of gatherings, and wondered whether there was sufficient co-ordination between them all.

On Saturday 6 November, the Chester Sustainability Exhibition took place at Chester cathedral and CWDF had a display, with members in attendance the whole day. It was good to have the event, but we had concerns about it being in the cloisters (quite dark) and that most exhibitors were advocates of action to avoid a devastating rise in global temperatures. None the less, we had some interesting conversations and handed out our new glossy leaflets.

Our Forum Meeting on 16 November followed both this and COP26 (1 to 12 November in Glasgow). Together with representatives from local groups concerned about Climate Crisis, we discussed the outcomes and implications of COP26. We met at the Unity Centre, again with a Zoom link in place. Meeting chair Gill Miller briefly summarised the outcomes, and then views were given from the local groups. There were some positives, but many concerns about whether adequate action would be taken world-wide and whether support for Developing Countries would be adequate.

On 14 December, we held an informal Forum gathering at the Unity Centre to prepare for Christmas and to share updates with members from other local groups.

Our first meeting of 2022 was held in the Unity Centre on 28 January, when our Chester City MP, Chris Matheson, joined us. We discussed the reduction in Overseas Aid and the Labour Party’s approach; what the Government are doing to ensure that Nations are taking action to reduce carbon emissions before the COP27 meeting in Cairo in 2022; and what CWDF should be doing locally on the Climate Crisis. Chris was very helpful in his comments and there were a number of questions and comments. Chris and the Labour Party are very keen to ensure that the Overseas Aid Budget is restored to 0.7% of GDP, and that action is taken to prevent a rise in temperature above 1.5 degrees. He said that the Government was making positive statements but we would need to see if action were taken soon enough. He said that it would be good if CWDF and other local groups continued to seek to make Climate Crisis issues known, to speak out, and for individuals to take their own action in changing lifestyles.

Our last Forum meeting on 2 March was held at the University of Chester, as part of their “Go Green Week”. Our speaker was Dominic Brain, Global Head of Programme Development and Funding at Christian Aid, and his subject was “Disaster Reduction and Social Safety” programme in Nigeria. It was such an informative talk about the situation in Northern Nigeria. He had been there himself, and gave local information as well as an overview of the situation. It was so good to hear about local issues and developments involving local people to prepare them for extreme situations, like floods, which are likely to occur. This preparation helped ensure that local people knew how to react and so prevent a disaster. The meeting was at the University and we were very disappointed with a fairly low turnout, especially of CWDF members, for a high profile speaker.

Other Issues

In addition to Forum meetings the Committee has met monthly, at first by Zoom but latterly face to face. In addition to planning meetings, we have focussed on publicity. A major aspect was preparing a new CWDF leaflet with the help of a local designer. This has now been printed and is in full use. The other key aspects have been keeping our website up to date, enhancing our Facebook page, and branching out onto Twitter. This has greatly enhanced the number of people in contact with us.

We are very supportive of Fairtrade and were very pleased to be able to join them at Chester Cathedral Refectory on 28 February to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Chester becoming Britain’s the first “Fairtrade City”.

A most important aspect of our communications is our Diary. It is issued regularly, and includes information about events of other local groups who are members of CWDF. A very regular weekly event is "Tellus": Eco Communities Crowdcast hosted by Chester Friends of Earth. We are members of Chester Sustainability Forum which keeps us in touch with wider sustainability issues such as the "HyNet" project, which will produce Hydrogen from natural gas as a fuel for the Ellesmere Port industrial complex, and possibly as a replacement gas for domestic consumers in Frodsham - about which we have many concerns.

Finance: we never have an abundance of money but we do have enough to cover our costs. Holding meetings on Zoom meant that we did not have to make payments to The Unity Centre, but we decided to make donations to them of the same amounts we would have paid to meet there. This was a help to them in a very difficult financial position. We have also made donations to DEC for South Sudan Emergency and the India Covid Emergency appeals, and to Médecins Sans Frontières for disaster relief in Haiti. At the end of the 2021 year, we had a balance of £157.24

It has been a frustrating year largely due to Covid, but we are so thankful that we have achieved a full programme of meetings with help from Zoom, and continued to make an impact locally. But we are most concerned about smaller numbers at meetings, and that our membership is not growing and is ageing! We need members to publicise CWDF wherever possible, and by making full use of our new leaflet. **Terry Green Chair CWDF May 2022**

MAIN OUT-OF-WORK BENEFIT SEES ITS BIGGEST DROP IN VALUE IN FIFTY YEARS

Grace Hetherington 10 April 2022: New analysis from JRF highlights that 11 April marks the greatest fall in the value of the basic rate of out-of-work benefit in fifty years. A decade of cuts and freezes mean this benefit has lost value in eight of the last ten years.

The 3.1% increase that comes into effect on Monday is based on inflation as of last September, whereas inflation is expected to hit 7.7% this month. This means households in receipt of benefits will experience a real-terms cut to their incomes which are already at historically low levels. Recent JRF analysis highlights that this decision will pull 600,000 people into poverty, around a quarter of whom are children.

Since 1972, ministers have decided how much to increase benefit levels by each year based on an assessment of inflation. Since 1987, they have typically considered the rate of inflation the previous September to decide benefit levels each April. While ministers consider inflation when setting unemployment benefit levels, they may choose to use a higher or lower rate than this.

The new analysis highlights that for eight of the ten benefit level changes between 2013 and 2022, the basic rate of unemployment benefits has lost value, leaving it at a 35-year low in real terms. From 2013-2019, ministers chose to reduce benefits in real terms by freezing their value or increasing them by a lower rate than inflation (at the same time as introducing other cuts).

While there is historical precedent for benefit levels not keeping pace with real inflation due to volatility in inflation, this tends to cancel out over time. However, this year marks the first time that benefit levels will fall significantly in real terms due to this volatility following a sustained period of loss in value.

The next biggest annual fall in benefit value after 2022 was in 2010, but this followed a substantial increase the previous year, meaning people receiving benefits were not left waiting a whole year for benefit values to catch up with prices, as they will now.

Peter Matejic, Deputy Director for Evidence & Impact at JRF said:

"With living costs predicted to rise further this year, it is difficult to comprehend the logic behind a choice not to act to protect the value of benefits, thereby imposing the single biggest benefit cut of its kind in fifty years. The government has chosen to weaken the incomes of the poorest at the worst possible moment.

"A decade of cuts and freezes to benefits have left many people in our society in increasingly desperate situations, struggling to afford food, energy and basic hygiene products. Without urgent action from the government, the stark reality is that the situation could get much worse. The government must, at a minimum, ensure that benefit rises match the real rise in living costs as an immediate first step to protect people from hardship. Beyond this, the government needs to further strengthen our social security system, which was already woefully inadequate even before the cost of essentials began to shoot up."

<https://www.jrf.org.uk/press/main-out-work-benefit-sees-its-biggest-drop-value-fifty-years>

Read our method briefing on fifty years of benefit uprating: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/fifty-years-benefit-uprating>

PRAYER FOR SURVIVORS OF ABUSE 17 MAY 2022

The Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors (PCPM) has highlighted the importance of prayer and suggested to Pope Francis that the worldwide Catholic Church should join together in a day of prayer. The Holy Father has welcomed this initiative. The Bishops have chosen Tuesday of the 5th Week of Easter as the Day of Prayer for Victims and Survivors of Abuse — 17 May 2022. There were two connected reasons for moving the Day of Prayer from Lent to Easter: this is not a penitential day for the failure of the Church and others to respond to the scourge of abuse but a day of prayer for those who have been abused in a season of hope and new life. *The Isaiah Journey* has prepared a range of resources for prayer, action and reflection for use throughout the year which are launched on the day of prayer.

The Isaiah Journey is a working group of the Bishops' Conference and has grown out of the need for a pastoral-spiritual response to the suffering of victims and survivors of abuse in the Church. Inspired by the writing of the prophet Isaiah, it has three strands: seeking truth; bringing hope; finding healing. What is important is for the local Church to acknowledge and respond in prayer when it is able rather than restrict its activities to just one day in the year. Much of the material in this resource has been written by and with survivors. Though it is hoped that survivors will be included in any local initiative that may not always be possible.

The full range of this year's resources can be found on the Bishops' Conference website:

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/prayer-for-survivors-of-abuse-2022/>

Prayer for Healing and Reconciliation

Praise to you Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
the source of all consolation and hope.

Be the refuge and guardian of all
who suffer from abuse and violence.

Comfort them and send healing
for their wounds of the body, soul and spirit.

Help us all and make us one with you
in your love for justice

as we deepen our respect for the dignity of every human life.

Giver of peace, make us one in celebrating
your praise, both now and forever.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

This prayer has been prepared by the Diocese of Northampton. It can be used at Mass and at other times when the community gathers, such as meetings, on the day of prayer and in the days leading up to it. It could begin either on the preceding Sunday or there could be a novena of prayer beginning on Sunday 8 May.

Intercessions

The following two intercessions are offered to parishes. One or both may be included in the Intercessions at Mass celebrated on the Day of Prayer (17 May) and the surrounding days:

For all survivors of sexual abuse; may they come to know, once again, the compassionate love of God and find healing and hope in the risen Lord.

For all who work in safeguarding; may they place the voice of the survivor at the heart of their service and through their care for others help to build up the Body of Christ.

Other Activities

Prayer and action go together. The day of prayer is not simply a time to pray an intercession but also an invitation to learn, engage and do.

- Find out about the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency
- Check that safeguarding information is clearly displayed in the church.
- Discover local charities which support victims and survivors.

Find out about what they do

Support their activities or see what opportunities for volunteering

Hold a fundraising event for their work

FILM SUCCESS FOR ORMSKIRK ACTOR

A War film starring an aspiring Ormskirk Actor is set to screen at the World-famous Pinewood Studios Local lad, Joseph Stanley, stars in *Enemy of the Heart* which was selected from nominees across 25 countries to be screened at the prestigious Pinewood Studios. The film won the Jury Prize for Best Feature Film at the Global Lift Off Film Festival earlier this month.

Former Ormskirk school pupil Joseph Stanley takes the role of Patrick O'Connor in the war-time drama. The 22-year-old won an Honorable Mention accolade for Best Actor at the Los Angeles-based Global Film Awards earlier this year.

During its 85-year history, Pinewood studios has become synonymous with some of the World's most enduring productions, hosting Hollywood's finest to shoot scenes for *Star Wars*, *Superman*, *The Hobbit*, *James Bond* and *Killing Eve*. The Pinewood award marks the film's 40th accolade having swept the board in festivals across Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Cannes, Toronto, Rome and London.

The all-star cast also includes the film's Crosby-based creator, Claryn Scott, Maghull's Lucy Wareing and Michael Dolan from Crosby.

Joseph who is currently studying professional acting at Bristol Old Vic, said about being successful in the Best Actor category: "I'm made up to be recognised for this award for my portrayal of Patrick O'Connor. I loved every minute on set and to be a part of something so meaningful, is a privilege."

The film was inspired by true events and follows the life of Patrick's Anglo-Italian family living in Britain during the outbreak of war. Those aged 16 to 70 of German, Italian and Austrian heritage, were interned on the orders of Prime Minister, Winston Churchill when Germany and Italy joined the war against Britain. Hundreds of internees were sent aboard the S.S. Arandora Star, destined for Canada. Just two days following its departure from Liverpool, the ship was torpedoed by a German U-Boat in July, 1940 with the loss of eight hundred lives. A memorial of the tragedy stands at Liverpool's Pier Head.

Joseph said: "The film was a real eye-opener as it must have been an horrendous ordeal for those who were interned. The most challenging aspect was truly understanding what the families went through and being able to convey the emotional complexities of the role." Claryn added: "It's been an incredible year and we're ecstatic by all the awards and to be selected for Pinewood, that really is something special."

https://www.imdb.com/video/vi306692889/?ref=tt_vi_i_1

Joe Stanley #actor #ormskirk #bafta #baftas #enemyoftheheart

RELIGION MEDIA CENTRE PODCAST

Welcome to the fourth episode of the Religion Media Centre podcast, as presenter Hannah Scott-Joynt and her regular house guests discuss a range of topics including the role of religion in politics, the results of the French election, and Bucky Day – a celebration of a controversial drink brewed by monks.

Intro | 00:00

Hannah Scott-Joynt welcomes her regular co-hosts to the podcast and asks them to introduce their upcoming features.

Journo's Notebook | 02:18

Rosie Dawson welcomes journalists Tim Wyatt and Paris-based Wafa Jawad Abbas to discuss the French election results and their implications, especially for the Muslim community – and we discover that in France, unlike the UK, religious leaders have no voice in the political sphere.

Leo's Local | 13:32

Former BBC regional expert, Leo Devine, tells Hannah about one church leader's frustration at the lack of progress in bringing Ukrainian refugees to the UK, and excitement in the Jain community in Leicester as the animal sentience bill is about to achieve royal assent. Oh, and hold tight for Bucky Day!

The Big Interview | 21:59

Roger Bolton talks to Rt Rev Paul Butler, Bishop of Durham, about the Archbishop of Canterbury's intervention in the Government's refugee policy and how much influence the Church should have in political matters.

Azim's Academic | 36:32

Our resident correspondent from the world of academia Dr Azim Ahmed meets Dr Asma Khan from Cardiff University to discuss her project relating to mental health among Muslims in Britain

Life Laundry | 42:53

Hannah welcomes comedian, Paul Kerensa, and his special guest comic Imran Yusuf to discuss the thinking behind his new Radio 4 series on male identity.

<https://religionmediacentre.org.uk/podcast/episode-4/>

DIARY

MAY

7 NJPN AGM & Networking Day by Zoom www.justice-and-peace.org.uk 0207 901 4864

15 International Conscientious Objectors' Day ceremony at 1pm. Tavistock Square, WC1. The event will be livestreamed. <http://www.co-day.org>

Info/resources on conscientious objectors: www.paxchristi.org.uk 0208 203 4884 www.ppu.org.uk 020 7424 9444

15 – 21 Christian Aid Week: "Turn hunger into hope - with drought-resistant seeds, many could grow enough food for their families". Look out for an envelope in your letter box to make a donation, or go online to www.caweek.org for full details. <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week>

16 – 22 Laudato Si' Week www.laudatosimovement.org

17 Day of Prayer for Victims and Survivors of Abuse <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/prayer-for-survivors-of-abuse-2022/>

26 Social Justice Workshop Churches Together in Lancashire are planning a Social Justice Workshop for representatives from local churches for representatives from local churches. contact Mike Hart mikehart@gmail.com or Peter Lumsden pjlumsden58@gmail.com

28 Peace Vigil at The Cross, Chester, 12-1pm. This will be the fourth of the Peace Vigils at The Cross held on the last Saturday of the month. The silent vigil will be held between 12 and 1 pm, and we will wear black, or dark, clothing if possible. The general theme will be Peace, with a decision to be taken in advance of each vigil as to what the focus will be for the next one, such as Ukraine, Myanmar, arms sales, etc.

29 Gathered Voices Choir concert – free concert, all donations to CAFOD Ukraine Appeal) 2pm St Anthony's Catholic Church, Cadley Causeway, Fulwood, Preston PR2 3RX. All donations to go to the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal via CAFOD. There will be light refreshments afterwards in the Padua Room next to the church. Gathered Voices are an acapella choir under the musical direction of Jeff Borrowdale.

JUNE

4 'Finding Jesus in the Eucharist, the Poor and Creation.' With keynote speaker Fr Eamonn Mulcahy at St Wilfrid's Parish Centre, Chapel Street, Preston PR1 8BU 10am – 3.30pm Diocese of Lancaster Faith & Justice Commission. To book the event please use the following links. Event link: Book via - Eventbrite - Finding Jesus in the Eucharist <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/finding-jesus-in-the-eucharist-tickets-314503748177?aff=ebdssbdestsearch> or, alternatively, through the Lancashire Faith & Justice website: <http://www.lancasterfaithandjustice.co.uk/> (first page). Any queries, please contact Sue Grubic, Faith & Justice Worker (Diocese of Lancaster), at ldfjsue@gmail.com

5 World Environment Day www.worldenvironmentday.global

16-19 Green Expo 2022 from 10am to 6pm daily at the Riverside, Castle Drive, Chester. There will be displays, demonstrations, exhibits, and presentations on the latest sustainable technologies for powering future homes and transport. Learn how these technologies will impact our lives and potentially could create large numbers of skilled jobs locally and across the country. Admission is free. More information will be available from @greenexpochester and www.GreenExpo.uk nearer the time.

18 Liverpool Archdiocese J&P Commission Annual Assembly <https://jp.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk/>

19 Day for Life+ www.dayforlife.org

26 International Day in Support of Victims of Torture: www.acatuk.org.uk 01395 577 669 and <https://www.un.org/en/observances/torture-victims-day/>

JULY

19 Chester World Development Forum meeting at The Unity Centre, 7pm. CWDF members Linda & Stewart Shuttleworth will give us an update on their ongoing work in Uganda to improve mental health services in this large developing country.

22-24 44th Annual Justice and Peace Conference at the Hayes Centre Swanwick.

'HOPE! A VERB WITH ITS SLEEVES ROLLED UP'

Our Hope is you will return to your communities from our Conference with enthusiasm and commitment. This year commitment is so important, a commitment to new things, with new time and energy, in the post emergency time, enabling people in our country and beyond to go forward with Hope in everything they do.

How as Activists and People of Faith can we help those in need to find Hope?

Over the weekend we will be looking at Signs of Hope in Our World.

Part of the weekend will look at the Signs of Hope following last year's NJPN Environmental Conference and COP 26 .

As a sign of Hope in Our Future NJPN is encouraged that the following Faith Organisations have agreed to partner together to present this Conference: NJPN. Christians Aware, Stella Maris, ACTA and The Joint Public Issues Team.

Booking form on <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference/>

NB. Bookings made after Friday 20th May 2022 incur a late booking charge of £10 per adult

- Read The Spring issue of *MouthPeace* the quarterly online newsletter for Shrewsbury, Liverpool and Lancaster dioceses <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/cms/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Mouthpeace-Spring-22..pdf>
- 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