



Justice & Peace

Autumn 2024

News from the National Justice & Peace Network

Prayer for Peace

Lord, defuse the violence of our tongues and our hands. Renew our hearts and minds, so that the word which always brings us together will be "brother", and our way of life will always be that of: Shalom, Peace, Salaam! Amen.

-Pope Francis

NJPN and QTIG — 'Just Politics'

The Quaker Truth & Integrity Group (QTIG) began as an informal group of Quakers sharing a deeply felt concern about the state of truth and integrity in public life in Britain. In March 2022 it gained official recognition by the Britain Yearly Meeting (the national Quaker body) as a "Quaker Recognised Body".

The link between QTIG and NJPN was established in 2022, when, following personal contact, two of our members were invited to speak to the NJPN Executive. This link was strengthened in the following year, when we were invited to offer a workshop as part of the 2023 Conference "Sustainability? Survival or Shutdown" – since Truth and Integrity are keystones to achieving a sustainable future. Following this, in a remarkable act of spiritual generosity and confidence in ecumenical working, two of us were invited onto the group planning the NJPN 2024 conference 'Just Politics'.

Conferences are designed to inspire, energise, and assist participants to go forward with renewed confidence and strengthened commitment. It helps if the conference has a clear arc – a narrative threading through the speakers, contributors and workshops and which emerges over the course of the weekend. This was certainly the intention in planning such a rich and varied programme, drawing on the talents of individuals from a wide range of background, experience and church

traditions: Dr. Guli Francis-Deqani (Bishop of Chelmsford) offered a comprehensive, richly intellectual view of faith and politics based on her work in the House of Lords; Molly Scott Cato spoke with passion and authority on the precious gift we hold in living in a democracy, and how fragile the system is (for the first time ever, knocking on doorsteps for the Green Party, she heard the ominous sentence "I don't really believe in democracy, love"); Steve Whiting gave practical tools for engagement in social action based on his work in Turning the Tide; Catholic Emerging Young Leaders inspired all who heard them with their clarity, idealism and sense of responding to challenge; the conference had a real sense of what can be achieved when we heard from Fr. Chris Hughes, Sara Bryson and Shantel Suneesh of Tyne and Wear Citizens UK, and their inspirational success in ensuring a fair fare for young people on bus transport in their region. John Battle ensured the conference was both entertained and enthused, acting as Master of ceremonies throughout. We were all made very aware that a new parliament offered possibilities for engaging with MPs - many of whom will be new – collectively: there will be the need to support them in the difficult job of being an MP in an age when social media offers an easy path to abuse and insult, and two MPs have been murdered in recent memory.

Continued on next page...

For your diary..
NJPN
POST-CONFERENCE
CATCH-UP

HOW ARE WE ALL
FEELING? WHAT HAS BEEN
ACHIEVED IN THE LAST 3
MONTHS?

Thursday 31st October
7.30pm—9pm
(Via Zoom)
Details will be sent out to all Conference delegates nearer the time.

Save the Dates!

EVENING MEETING VIA ZOOM
26TH SEPTEMBER 2024
7.30PM—9PM
~

OPEN NETWORKING DAY
16th November 2024
Leeds
10.30am-3.30pm

Keep an eye out for details!



NEXT ISSUE DATE—**January 2025**
Articles required by **3rd January 2025**

National Justice and Peace Network

@nationaljusticeandpeacenet928

@NJandPNetwork

NJandPNetwork

Page 1 continued...

It is also important for us to engage our elected representatives on issues of the justice in our social order that we all seek.

It is very easy for the momentum generated in a conference to be dissipated in the slog of everyday life. There will be a follow up meeting via Zoom — which you are welcome to join — on October 31st, in which participants share their experience of following up the conference with practical action.

As for QTIG and NJPN, where do we go from

here? A new government does not minimise the need for truth and integrity, or avert the impending threats to democracy outlined by Molly. We look to stronger working with NJPN, even as we assess our own future, seeking the practical action we can undertake together.

If you are interested in our work, or would like to get in contact, we can be reached at:
quakertruth@gmail.com

Gerald Hewitson & Anne Wilkinson,
Co-Clerks — Quaker Truth and Integrity Group



The Living Wage and the Catholic Community

On the Sunday morning at Conference, Fr. Chris Hughes, Sara Bryson and Shantel Suneesh presented a session on Broad-based Community Organising. During this, Fr. Chris spoke about the Real Living Wage. Many of our delegates were so incensed that this did not appear to be a standard across many of our Dioceses that the NJPN as a whole has committed to campaign on this issue during the coming year.

Fr. Chris writes: -

The Living Wage Movement started in the early 90s in the East London Citizens (TELCO). Cleaners and security workers at Canary Wharf, who went to the Mosques and Church that were members of TELCO, complained that they were working over 50 hours plus. They could pay the bills just but did not have time for family and loved ones. They wanted a rate of pay that meant the bills were still being paid and they could spend more time with families and loved ones.

They initially focused on HSBC and after a struggle they agreed to pay a wage known as the 'Living Wage' that meant they could buy Christmas and Birthday presents and have a holiday. There are now 15,000 Living Wage Employers across the country. These are employers (and those they contract out services too) who pay according to the rates set by the Living Wage Foundation (LWF) For more information re the Living Wage go to: <https://livingwage.org.uk/>

In the late 90s the Blair government established a minimum wage which became a legal requirement for all employers. The rate has always been considerably lower than the rate set by the LWF.

The current Living Wage Foundation Rate (LWF) is £12 an hour outside London. The

London one is £13.15 an hour. The legal minimum wage which the Government confusingly now calls 'The Living Wage' (TLW) is £11.44 an hour. 56p an hour difference does not seem much but for a 40-hour week over 52 weeks of the year, the difference is over £1,150 outside London and £3,500 in London, which would make a great difference to a family. Over 120 years ago, Pope Leo XIII introduced the idea of a "just" wage in his encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*. He defined the just wage as an amount needed to support a 'thrifty and upright worker plus his family' and prescribed that it must be sufficient enough to allow the worker to save and acquire property of his own.

Research by the North East Child Poverty Commission shows that 67% of children in poverty are in families where at least one member is working.

It is interesting to note that in training that is being offered by the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA), the Cost-of-Living Crisis is regarded as a safeguarding issue, so the prevention of poverty is now linked as a safeguarding concern by the Bishops of England and Wales.

The Bishops of England and Wales themselves acknowledged, in a statement published in November 2023 of the harm being done by the Cost-of-Living crisis. Following on from the statement, Archbishop Mark O'Toole of Cardiff announced that his Archdiocese would become a Living Wage Employer, the first Welsh Diocese to do so.

It is good that the Bishops Conference have—

Page 2 continued...

—called on various measures to reduce levels of property such as scrapping the two-child benefit cap. But the case of the bishops would be taken more seriously if they did all they could do to prevent low pay within their respective dioceses. At the moment, as well as Cardiff Archdiocese, one diocese in Scotland has been accredited, that is the Diocese of Paisley. Five others in England have been accredited. They are Westminster, Birmingham, Salford, Brentwood and Hexham and Newcastle. This means of the thirty dioceses in England, Scotland and Wales only seven have been accredited by the LWF.

In contacting a diocese, you could link low pay to:

- High rates of child poverty.
- That it is harmful of marriages and family life, which is central to the teaching of the Church, as attested by TELCO
- That CSSA sees poverty and distress caused by the Cost of Living crisis as a Safeguarding issue.

Some points of clarification if they state they are paying the 'Living Wage':
Are they confusing the LWF rate with the...

- Legal requirement of the TLW (i.e. The Living Wage, previously known as the minimum wage).
- If they are paying £12 an hour (or £13.15 in the Archdiocese of Southwark), then ask if they have ensured, which the seven accredited dioceses have done, that the companies they regularly contract out work to, are also paying the LWF rate to their employees. The accredited dioceses could advise as to who how they achieved this with the contracted companies.
- If they are paying the LWF rate and have given you assurances that contracted work is also being paid by the LWF rate, then ask them to consider becoming accredited by the LWF. The sign it will give in being an employer that is paying a just rate is highly significant. If all 30 dioceses were accredited, it would really enhance any call to combat poverty made by the Catholic Church in this country. If the diocese you contact is not sure about the process, ask them to contact the nearest accredited diocese or the Living Wage Foundation, to ask how they can become accredited. I am sure the LWF or an accredited diocese will be happy to advise.

Fr Chris Hughes is a Parish Priest of St Cuthbert's & St Joseph's, North Shields



World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel — 16th-22nd September

“Whatever you did...you did for me.” Matthew 25:40

Each year the World Council of Churches invites all of us to join together for a week of prayer for a just peace for all in Palestine and Israel. We are encouraged to educate ourselves and others, to pray and to take action for justice. This year the focus is on Gaza.

Since the beginning of the war on Gaza, the level of human loss and destruction has been unprecedented in the Holy Land. The statistics issued by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs are devastating. Most hospitals are out of service with severe shortages of medicines and medical supplies. All the schools have been destroyed, leaving 625,000 school-age children without any education or schooling, and all the universities have been reduced to rubble. People are constantly displaced, with fewer and fewer belongings, to so-called 'safe zones' that are then bombed, with huge loss of life, countless severe injuries resulting in amputations and life-long disabilities. It is impossible to imagine the

levels of trauma suffered, especially by those whose lives have been dominated by the innumerable Israeli attacks on Gaza over the years.

The deliberate denial of aid, water, food, medical supplies, fuel and sanitary provision, have led to starvation, severe dehydration, illness, skin diseases and unimaginable living conditions. Seeing and hearing all of this and the silence and inaction of political leaders can make us feel both angry and helpless. But those suffering and all those working for justice need us to be alongside them. They need to see and hear us listening, praying and speaking out, denouncing all violence, the genocide, the siege on Gaza, the occupation of Palestine and the apartheid system that has been in place for so long. We need to denounce the UK arms sales to Israel that are fuelling the war on Palestine, the refusal of the UK Government to call Israel to account and to call on them to implement the ICJ rulings.
Continued on next page...

Page 3 continued...

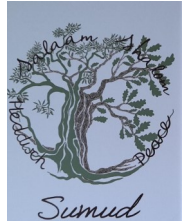
Many of us have learnt, from our Palestinian friends, the concept of 'SUMUD' meaning steadfastness, resilience and perseverance. Some may know this as, 'To exist is to Resist', often seen on the Israeli separation barrier that imprisons Palestinians in the West Bank. In Palestine the image of SUMUD is the olive tree, deeply rooted, long-lived and bearing new life of blossom and fruit. Olive trees can live for thousands of years and if damaged can regenerate themselves.

SUMUD for Palestinians is the everyday, nonviolent resistance against an unjust occupation. It is being rooted in the land and having a determination to stay despite the political, economic, physical and psychological injustices that are committed against them.

We learn from this that as peacemakers, we too need SUMUD. Working together, encouraging each other, accompanying those suffering injustices and praying for faithful steadfastness, resistance and persistence and that our commitment to the Peace of Christ will produce the fruits of nonviolent peace-making.

Let's do whatever we can in our homes, churches, communities, schools and workplaces to pray, learn and take action for peace in Palestine and Israel. Please let us know what you are planning to do, no matter how small you think it is. Take photos and send us a short report of what you did and we will send these to Palestine.

Pax Christi has two Prayer Cards that can be used personally and could be given out to others. 'No Place to lay my Head', with action ideas and the prayer, 'Among the Rubble' and a SUMUD card, with the prayer, 'Steadfast God'. Both prayers have been written for us by Jan Sutch Pickard of the Iona Community. The SUMUD cards have a beautiful image of the Palestinian olive tree entwined with a Welsh Oak tree with the word 'peace' in Welsh, English, Arabic and Hebrew. The illustration was the inspiration of the West Wales Friends of Palestine who have generously permitted us to use it. Available from <https://paxchristi.org.uk/product-category/palestineandisrael/>
Ann Farr — Pax Christi International Working Group for Justice in Palestine and Israel



For dates this time around, please check out our website: www.justice-and-peace.org.uk

Become a Member:

Membership is open to local groups, families and individuals. Individual Subscription only £25 a year (but you are welcome to give more!) Low Income £15. Download a membership form from the website or contact the administrator.
admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk

DONATE TO NJPN: Online via our website. **By cheque** payable to NJPN. **BACS** to NJPN Sort Code:16-31-15 Account No: 10089516, put your name and Donation in the reference field. To make a regular donation by **Standing Order**, contact the Administrator or download the Membership Form on the website.

The National Justice & Peace Network welcomes all who share a vision of a world in which people live in peace and harmony, where our common humanity is respected and all are able to contribute freely to the common good. NJPN seeks to encourage work for justice and peace by promoting communication and shared action between members, supporters and partners.

This newsletter is produced three times a year by the Network

The views expressed are not necessarily those of the National Justice and Peace Network.

Editorial Group: Michael Chambers, Sharon Chambers, Stephen Cooke. Ann Kelly, Anne Peacey.



National Justice & Peace Network (NJPN)
39 Eccleston Square London SW1V 1BX Tel: 020 7901 4864
Email: admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk
www.justice-and-peace.org.uk

A UK Registered Charity no. 1114947
A company limited by guarantee: Company no. 5036866
Registered Office: 39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1BX