

Wales Synod Rural Life Policy (revised June 2012)

- 1) The Priorities of the Methodist Church commits the Church “to proclaim and affirm its conviction of God's love in Christ, for us and for all the world”; this involves “supporting community development and action for justice” and “developing... the capacity to speak of God and faith in ways that make sense to all involved”
- 2) The Wales Synod recognises that the Agricultural Industry is a significant part of the Welsh economy and that issues of Rural Life are an important aspect of the communities and churches we are called to serve.
- 3) Accordingly the Wales Synod commits itself
 - i) to support ministry and mission in rural communities and
 - ii) to encourage engagement with rural and agricultural issues
- 4) In order to support this work, the Synod will appoint a Rural Life Officer who will have responsibility for co-ordinating the Synod's engagement with rural and agricultural issues (see job description attached.)
- 5) In line with the Priorities of the Methodist Church this work will be carried out wherever possible in partnership with others. In the context of the Wales Synod these partners will include:
 - i) Synod Cymru and its officers
 - ii) Ecumenical partners and their Rural Life Officers
 - iii) Cytun and its officers
 - iv) The *Connexional* Rural Officer and the Arthur Rank Centre
 - v) Other community partners (eg. Farm Crisis Network, Gwlad, etc.)
- 6) It is not envisaged that the Synod Rural *Life* Officer will undertake this work on his or her own, but rather that he or she will co-ordinate this work on behalf of the Synod, *developing a network of rural ministers*, local Rural Life Officers and Agricultural Chaplains.
- 7) However, where circuits or churches wish to appoint a local Rural Life Officer or Agricultural Chaplain, any such appointment and job description *should be agreed in consultation with the Synod Rural Life Officer*. The Synod Officer will also be responsible for ensuring that there is appropriate *accountability, support*, training and induction.
- 8) The Synod Rural *Life* Officer shall make an annual report on engagement with Rural Life issues to the Synod through the Synod Policy Committee.
- 9) This policy will be reviewed *after 3 years* or in light of future developments with the partners (in section 5) and the appointment of local officers and chaplains (in sections 6 and 7.)