



Cornwall Faith Covenant

This Faith Covenant is a joint commitment between faith communities and local authorities to **a set of principles that guide engagement**, aiming to improve partnership working and promote open, practical working on all levels.

Our vision for Cornwall is:

“A welcoming, safe and flourishing place in which to live, work and grow up. In Cornwall’s communities, people from all backgrounds trust and support each other and can realise their full potential. We work together to create a fairer, more inclusive Cornwall developing our shared values while celebrating our diverse communities”.

Context

Cornwall’s faith communities work through Cornwall Faith Forum, Churches Together in Cornwall and with others, growing a spirit of love, co-operation, respect and peace. Together they make a valuable contribution to the communities of Cornwall through social action and care for the environment. We want to see cooperation and understanding extended throughout our communities as our towns and villages become more diverse.

Cornwall Faith Forum is inclusive of different faith communities across Cornwall. Membership currently includes the Baha’i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Islam, Jewish, Pagan faiths and independent members.

The Cornwall Plan 2020-2050 sets out a vision focussed on creating a fairer, more inclusive Cornwall as well as a greener, cleaner Cornwall. This vision will be achieved through living our values of fairness, ambition, inclusion and respect.

This Covenant is based on our values and our active support for community cohesion now and in the future.

The Faith Covenant is built on the following principles:

- Faith communities are free to practise their beliefs and religious observances without restriction, to raise their voice in public debate and to be respected, within the framework of UK law.
- Public services and faith-based social action should respect service users from all backgrounds, offering appropriate services to one and all without discrimination (direct or indirect).

Together we understand and ensure that the protected characteristics included in the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation, are applied. Our decision making should also give specific consideration to people who are Cornish and those who are ‘care experienced’ which is recognised by Cornwall Council locally as if it were a tenth protected characteristic. ‘Care experienced’ means anyone who has experience of children’s social care services for any amount of time.

- The voice, participation and solutions that faith communities bring are important, and they should be included fully in consultations for services which benefit the wider community. This includes being mindful of any spiritual beliefs or needs even when these are not expressed through an identified religious or faith-based group.

Commitments

Cornwall Council welcomes the involvement of faith groups in the delivery of services and social action on an equal basis with other providers and groups, recognising that capacity to do so may be more challenging for some of our smaller faith communities. However, they commit to:

- Building relationships and trust with all faith groups;
- Adopting strategies for the engagement of faith communities in consultation exercises;
- Encouraging faith groups and their members to be involved in collaboration and codesign of local services and/or local solutions to issues that are important to communities
- Sharing training and learning opportunities with faith communities.

Cornwall's faith-based organisations (including those represented through Cornwall Faith Forum) will work actively with local authorities, and their relevant partners, in the design and delivery of services to the public. In addition, they commit to:

- Seeking opportunities to bring people together to serve the community, particularly its most marginalised and most vulnerable members;
- Working in partnership to support all the communities of Cornwall, contributing a spiritual dimension in the interests of a holistic approach;
- Ensuring excellence in safeguarding children and adults, health and safety, accountability and transparency;
- Responding to consultations where appropriate;
- Sharing training and learning opportunities with the local authority.

A workplan for all signatory organisations and their representative members will align with Cornwall Council mission of **working with communities for a carbon neutral Cornwall, where everyone can start well, live well and age well**; and the priority outcomes contained within Cornwall Council Business Plan 2022 -2026 so that Cornwall is:

- **A brilliant place to be a child and grow up**
- In a **thriving, sustainable Cornwall** that offers a secure home, a decent income and a great environment for all
- With **vibrant, safe, supportive communities** where people help each other live well
- All supported by an **empowering and enterprising council** that secures great value for money and offers a consistently excellent customer experience.

Work will also align to Cornwall Faith Forum's three distinct themes:

- **Learning for peace** to increase faith awareness across all age groups.
- **Sharing for peace** and celebrating the diversity in our communities.
- **Building for peace**, recognising the need for and importance of sacred spaces to faith communities.

And with the Vision of Churches Together in Cornwall: **Inspiring unity, sharing our gifts – for the people of Cornwall.**

