

## **Draft 2019 version by Quakers in Denbighshire of the 2018 Conwy County Peace Charter on the reduction of the militarisation of children and young people.**

**Preamble:** North Wales has a long history of campaigning for Peace. Notable Welsh campaigners for Peace include Henry Richard, Gwynfor Evans, Lewis Valentine. In the 1920's following the First World War North Wales women inspired and led Peace marches to Westminster. Further back in history Aberconwy was the scene of violent conflict between English invaders and Welsh citizens. The renowned castle serves as a reminder of this and a reminder that ultimately conflict can only be resolved by peaceful means.

### **The Charter:**

In the best Peaceful traditions of the Welsh nation, as encapsulated in the National Eisteddfod appeal: "A Oes Heddwch?" ['Is there Peace?'], we would urge the Denbighshire County Council to adopt the following Charter:

1. We are concerned that young people are growing up in a society that glorifies violence and in which violence is shown as the only way to resolve conflict. This is evident on television, in film, through video games and by the Government's use of military force.
2. Violent control of children within Families has long been outlawed and we recognise that for young people to grow into confident, thoughtful and caring adults they need to be nurtured and provided with positive role models.
3. We are concerned at the increasing promotion of the army in schools and in society at large as evidenced by Armed Forces Day, where every year the army shows off its armaments and killing machines and invites children as young as three to sit behind huge guns and look through the sights at what they might shoot. This is presented as and regarded by many onlookers and families themselves as 'Family Entertainment'.
4. We object to this normalisation of violence in our town centres and in our schools. We ask that no child under the age of 18 be allowed to handle guns at these military displays.
5. We ask that every effort should be made by the Council to prevent active recruitment of school children by the Armed Forces in schools and elsewhere.
6. We propose that a national campaign be set up to legally prevent children as young as 16 from being recruited into the Armed Forces. The legal minimum age for serving in the Armed Forces should be increased to 18 as is the case in all other European countries.
7. September 21<sup>st</sup> is International Peace Day when we reflect on the millions of people across the world who have been killed in violent conflicts. Every year on this day we will review the Charter and look for the next step.
8. We encourage the appointment of a Peace Champion for the Council, in order to facilitate and coordinate the activities based on these principles.

Young people matter. They are the future.