

The Right Honourable Simon Hart MP

Secretary of State for Wales

By email c/o correspondence@ukgovwales.gov.uk

17th June 2021

Dear Secretary of State,

I have received a copy of your letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury dated 8th June. Until a new Archbishop of Wales is elected, matters relating to the conduct of bishops in the Church in Wales become the responsibility of myself as the Senior Bishop. I have agreed with Archbishop Justin that I will also reply to your letter since it relates to the Church in Wales rather than the Church of England.

I was grateful that, in your letter, you acknowledged that clergy have a role to play in holding politicians and others to account in their public office. In order to do this effectively, clergy need to be respectful and robust in both their delivery and discourse. The Bishop of St Davids has apologised for the hurt she has caused as a result of her posts on Twitter and the Church in Wales has welcomed her statement. I add my apology on behalf of the Church in Wales; I regret the intemperate language that she used and the hurt it caused. I have spoken with the bishop and believe her to be sincere in her apology and that she wishes to improve the way in which her ministry operates in the public domain. It is clear to me that bishops cannot make distinctions between personal and public statements when both are publicly available. It is also clear that bishops require advice and support which enables us to be effective in our ministry and it is my intention to secure this in consultation with my colleagues.

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The Church in Wales seeks to be welcoming to everyone in the nation of Wales regardless of whether or not they share our Christian faith. We do not discriminate and I regret the impression that has been formed that we favour one political viewpoint over another. All members and supporters of all mainstream political parties are welcome in our churches. The Church in Wales shares with our political leaders a longing for a better, fairer, more just society where discrimination and poverty are consigned to history. If you are able to find time to meet with my fellow bishops and I, we would welcome a conversation with you.

I note that you intend to make my letter more widely available and have therefore shared both your letter and my response with my fellow bishops and sent a copy of my reply to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

With good wishes

Yours sincerely



The Right Reverend Andy John

Bishop of Bangor