

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK - County Hall on Monday, 15th October, 2018 at 1.00 pm

PRESENT: County Councillors: R.John, M.Lane, J.Watkins and T.Thomas.

Faith Representatives
Free Church Council
Bahá'í Faith

Revd. P. Baines
Mrs. S. Cave

Teacher Associations
Mr. A. Jones

Co-Opted Member
Mrs. K. Fitter

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Paula Webber
Sharon Randall-Smith
Wendy Barnard

RE Consultant
Head of Achievement and Attainment
Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

County Councillors P.Pavia, A. Webb, Dr. A. Daly, N. Chatral, S. Oram and
M. Millington

1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

County Councillor R. John was noted as Chair as appointed by Council.

Andrew Jones was elected as Vice Chair.

2. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed all Committee Members. County Councillor L. Brown was welcomed as an observer.

The Chair advised that, whilst the meeting was being filmed to assist the record of the meeting, it was not being live streamed. The Chair was interested in the Committee's views on public live streaming of future meetings.

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from County Councillors A. Webb and P. Pavia, N. Namgyal Chatral, Dr. A. Daly, M. Millington and S. Oram.

3. Minutes and matters arising from last meeting held on Friday, 9th February 2018

The minutes of the last meeting were confirmed and signed as a true record subject to the following amendment:

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Item 1: Should read – The Chair set out her proposals for a constructive and democratic meeting seeking members' co-operation to assist her in managing the meeting effectively.

4. SACRE Membership

An update was provided as follows:

County Councillors:

- County Councillor R. John replaces County Councillor L. Brown
- County Councillor A. Easson replaced by County Councillor T. Thomas.

Co-Opted Members:

- County Councillor T. Thomas moved as above leaving a Vacancy

Faith Representatives:

- Roman Catholic Church: Mr. R. Cottrell resigned as he was moving away.
- Free Church Council (3 vacancies): Major Andrews (Salvation Army) resigned. It was noted that new Officers will be commencing in Abergavenny shortly and one may be able to fill the vacancy. There are two further long standing vacancies.
- Muslim Faith: No nomination received to date
- Sikh Faith: Neeta Baicher resigned

Teacher Representatives:

- Nominations are required to replace Sharon Perry-Phillips and Clare Cooper

RE Consultant:

- Gill Vaisey resigned and replaced by Paula Webber

It was requested that the various groups are asked for nominations to fill the vacancies.

5. SACRE Annual Report 2017-2018

Paula Webber had met with the Chair and the Chief Officer, Children and Young People. The annual report is in progress and will be sent by e mail to members to add any comments and confirm.

6. Roles and Responsibilities of SACRE members

Paula Webber, Religious Education (RE) Consultant provided a presentation on the roles and responsibilities of SACREs.

It was discussed how to engage to be a high quality SACRE referring to the previous well regarded WASACRE conference, RE days and workshops held in Monmouthshire. It was agreed that this should be discussed in more detail and Members were invited to share some ideas electronically with the RE Consultant.

7. Curriculum development update - to consider the Welsh Government consultation with SACREs

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The RE Consultant referred to the draft Humanities Areas Of Learning and Experience (AOLE) circulated prior to the meeting and the PowerPoint consultation slides that have been delivered with Welsh Government across Wales.

Welsh SACRE views are sought on the relationship between the proposed syllabus and the Humanities AOLE, opinions on a supporting framework for RE (and elements to consider for inclusion in such a framework) and the implications for Monmouthshire.

It was announced that Welsh Government has seconded the RE Adviser and Libby Jones, RE Adviser at Wrexham, to work with a working party on the supporting framework. Feedback on the framework has been positive and it is evident that RE has parity with other subjects which represents significant progress.

A Member stated that the supporting framework will be very important to maintain parity with other subjects and acknowledged how RE is rapidly growing in the across England and Wales. The RE Consultant agreed and suggested showing a video of Donaldson expanding upon the stronger position of RE in the Humanities curriculum at the next meeting. It was added that it is important that RE continues to be multi-disciplinary in terms of theology, ethics and philosophy.

In support of the framework, it was emphasised that not all schools have an RE specialist to advise on the curriculum. It was agreed to highlight this point in the consultation response. The availability of good training and recruitment of specialist teachers is key.

It was added that the framework will also assist in preparatory work prior to GCSE courses.

A Member was very pleased to see RE back in a prominent position in the curriculum.

Members were invited to read all the documents and provide comments to the Clerk within the next week.

8. Estyn Thematic Report

It was noted that the report was published in June 2018. A number of recommendations are included for which it was suggested that an action plan could be compiled.

1. **Prevent:** It was explained that the reference to Counter-Terrorism concerns ensuring that all staff have undertaken the Prevent training and that records are kept by schools and Local Authorities. WASACRE has asked for a presentation on the Prevent training to cascade back to each SACRE.
2. **Transition:** A Member asked how we facilitate transition from primary to secondary phase to avoid repetition. In response it was explained that each cluster deals with transition slightly differently but mainly with transition days where RE topics are included. It was explained that there is a lot of planning. It has been identified that bringing all clusters up to the same standard is a point to add to the development plan to be advanced with colleagues from EAS, working with the clusters and networking with teachers in the Gwent region.
3. **Places of Worship to Visit/Visiting Faith Representatives:** It was confirmed that Gill Vaisey had provided SACRE with a list and this will be continued. It was clarified that the Places of Worship on the list are not "approved" as no visits or risk assessments have been undertaken.
4. **Professional Learning Opportunities:** Concern was expressed that the restricted budget position may limit opportunities for professional learning. It was responded that

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EAS is working with Learning Network Schools and this will be included in the EAS Business Plan in order to cascade good practice in RE to school staff. This was considered to be an important point and any suggestions are welcomed.

9. SACRE News Bulletin

The Chair welcomed submission of articles for the News Bulletin that will be distributed across the EAS region.

After some discussion, it was agreed that it would not be necessary to continue to release an edition each term but as and when necessary aiming for quality not quantity. It was agreed to still aim to publish three newsletters per annum. It was added that articles from young people add interest so such submissions are welcomed. It was suggested that a competition could be arranged.

It was explained that Caldicot School, RS Department, is a partner school in the Erasmus+ Programme, with Cathays High School and Cardiff West Community High School and three secondary schools from both Northern Spain and Warsaw, Poland with a purpose of devising a KS3 programme of study to challenge extremism and to counter radicalisation fit for the new Wales curriculum. Significant funds have been made available to work with the partners schools. The Spanish and Polish schools visit schools in Wales next month and visits will be made to Spain and Poland in due course.

It was suggested that the European Forum for Teachers of Religious Education (EFTRE) should be informed of the project.

It was explained that there is already a KS4 programme of study. This is included in the Welsh Baccalaureate as part of the Skills Challenge in Global Citizenship. There is also a KS2 programme so this work will fill the gap at KS3.

10. Monitoring provision and standards - RE and Collective Worship inspection reports and school self evaluation

The Head of Achievement and Assessment referred a summary of Estyn inspections undertaken since the last meeting kindly prepared by the RE Consultant, and picked out the main points.

In addition, at the next SACRE meeting, the self-evaluation reports of schools that have been inspected and two due to be inspected will be presented.

It was clarified that there were no recommendations but it was noteworthy that there were many opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum that are not being taken advantage of, and this is a training issue.

11. Update on the Withdrawal from RE Survey

WASACRE wrote to Chief Officers to request information on how many learners are being withdrawn from RE classes. All schools received the survey but it was noted that only 8 responses had been received from Monmouthshire schools and recording just one withdrawal (a Jehovah's Witness family).

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It was explained that WASACRE will receive a report of the national position at the Autumn Term meeting. Welsh Government will also receive the survey results.

12. Holocaust Memorial Day 2019

The theme of Holocaust Memorial Day this year is "Torn from Home" and details were included in the agenda pack. It was queried if there was an opportunity for SACRE Members to be involved in a service or event. An enquiry will be made if there is an authority event planned that can be attended. Members were supportive of the suggestion.

It was noted that Caldicot School takes Y11 pupils to Auschwitz each year and two had spoken of their experience at an event last year at Caldicot Library and a similar input could be arranged as necessary.

13. The Final Report from the commission on Religious Education in England

The RE Consultant commended an executive summary of this important document. It was explained that some of the content is only relevant to England and the survey was only carried out in England. A report from WASACRE on the aspects relevant to Wales is available.

The report raises the importance of RE in schools in England and Wales and there is lots of high quality input. Recommendations include changes to SACREs, teacher training and learner entitlement. WASACRE has written to Welsh Government to draw attention to the report.

It was agreed that there could be a more detailed discussion of the recommendations in the report at a future meeting.

A Member commented that the suggestion to change the title of Religious Education/Religious Studies to "Religion and World Views" was positive and could help to engage young people more.

14. WASACRE Business

RE Quality Mark: It was explained that WASACRE had received a presentation from Linda Rudge who leads on the Religious Education Quality Mark and it was suggested that there are schools in Monmouthshire that would be successful and could receive recognition for their good practice.

It was noted that there is a charge for the award but that the resources are free. SACRE agreed to support and promote the Quality Mark in Monmouthshire schools.

It was suggested that this could be the topic of an article in the News Bulletin to raise awareness in schools and to celebrate good practice.

Professional support to SACREs: WASACRE has highlighted the inconsistent approach to professional support for SACREs across Wales and Directors of Education have been contacted accordingly. The RE Consultant for Monmouthshire SACRE is a paid adviser through the EAS and there is consistency in clerking arrangements but this is not always the case in other parts of Wales. EAS leads on Humanities in the new curriculum and has recognised the value in provision of specialist support for SACREs. It is hoped that there will be more support throughout Wales in future.

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A Member welcomed Paula Webber as new RE Consultant and agreed that Wales is badly served in respect of professional RE advisors and asked that this matter is brought to the attention of Welsh Government emphasising the need for professional advice and cohesion.

The RE Consultant confirmed that WASACRE will be keeping this matter on the agenda and had written to Welsh Government.

15. To receive revised WASACRE constitution

The updated constitution was provided for information.

16. To receive and note draft minutes from WASACRE meetings

The draft WASACRE minutes were noted.

16.1. To note dates of future WASACRE meetings and confirm representation at Autumn meeting (Vale of Glamorgan: 20th November 2018 at Llantwit Major School)

It was noted that the next WASACRE meeting takes place on Tuesday 20th November at Llantwit Major School. Three places are available plus the RE Consultant. Interest to be sought by e mail.

17. To confirm the date of the SACRE meetings for 2018-2019

It was agreed to hold the next meeting in mid-February 2019 in the Conference Room; date to be circulated.

Contributions were invited from observers as follows:

County Councillor L. Brown asked whether the CAMAU Project was being taken into account in the writing of the New Curriculum for Wales. The County Councillor expressed the opinion that the Scottish Curriculum represented a better fit with legal requirements in terms of agreed syllabus and expressed concern about the direction of the Humanities curriculum as it puts religious and non-religious views on a par commenting that religious views must have an appropriate proportion of time allocated. The County Councillor requested that SACRE considers the findings of the CAMAU Project.

The RE Consultant thanked the Councillor for the comments and explained that Welsh Government and CAMAU are working closely together and are heavily involved in advising on the New Curriculum. It was confirmed that in the development of the Welsh curriculum the Scottish curriculum has been taken into account alongside other international approaches. It was also confirmed that subjects will be given a time allocation; timing will be determined locally by schools. The place of RE is now secured within the Humanities curriculum and RE will have the supporting framework. Additionally, it was reminded that Estyn and the Commission on Religious Education in England commission recognise RE as objective, critical and pluralistic.

A Member commented that it should be accepted that we live in an increasingly secular society and SACRE should be open to all views including those of Humanists.

The Clerk was asked to write to former members of the SACRE in appreciation of their work.

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18. Estyn Thematic Review and Update

This matter discussed at item 8.

The meeting ended at 2.51 pm