

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)
held
at Remote Meeting on Friday, 13th November, 2020 at 10.00 am**

PRESENT:

COUNTY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES:

County Councillor R. John (Chair)
County Councillor T. Thomas
County Councillor A. Webb

FAITH REPRESENTATIVES:

Revd. Peter Baines
Mrs. S. Gooding
Dr. L. Brown
Mr. A. Szwagrzak
Mrs S. Cave

TEACHER REPRESENTATIVES:

Mr. N. Jenkins
Mrs S. Hamer

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Wendy Barnard	Democratic Services Officer
Paula Webber	RE Adviser
Sharon Randall-Smith	Head of Attainment and Achievement

APOLOGIES:

County Councillor P.Pavia, Mrs M. Millington, Major N. Pryor and Mrs K. Wilding.

1. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 26th June 2020

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 26th June 2020 were confirmed as a true record.

2. Public Open Forum

No members of the public were present.

3. SACRE Membership update

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There were no changes to the membership since the last meeting. Several long-standing vacancies still exist.

Following discussion, it was agreed to approach the Youth Service to explore the potential for representation of young people on SACRE with a view to allocating one of the co-opted vacancies to the Youth Forum. This action point to be effected by S. Randall-Smith.

4. To receive and consider the SACRE Annual Report 2019-2020

This is the draft report of the SACRE's work for 2019/20 to be submitted to the Welsh Government by the end of the year.

It was suggested, following a letter of guidance from the Minister for Education, that the report is amended to make clear that local authorities have responsibility for representation by non-religious belief organisations on SACRE. The RE Adviser agreed to check this section. The report was approved for submission to Welsh Government subject to the amendments suggested

The opportunity was taken to provide some updates of developments since the timeframe of the annual report:

- Curriculum: The introduction of the new curriculum is 2022 as planned. Schools are working on designing their curriculum assisted by the EAS where requested, and to provide professional learning. The RE Framework has not yet been published due to legal delays in Welsh Government. Work on the framework was to be collaborative and WASACRE has written to Welsh Government to express its concerns that SACREs have not had sight of the framework since December 2019. It is hoped that SACREs will have this opportunity before the purdah period prior to the Senedd elections.

Due to COVID 19, schools are placing high emphasis on blended learning (lesson planning using technology, face to face, virtually or recorded lessons for students self-isolating at home). Information on blended learning was circulated to members.

It was agreed that RE Teachers need significant support to design the curriculum. This is challenging without the RE Framework and there is a risk that RE will be left behind. The teacher representative supported this view and welcomed any assistance and clarity.

- Professional Learning: EAS has provided support for teachers such as blended learning master classes, webinars and playlists and will design bespoke support for schools that make a request. Learning Network Schools (LNS) are supporting humanities from this year. For the first time there will be Primary Advisers. Much work is being done to provide quality assured resources. LNS meetings have taken place and attendees have split up to discuss discrete subject areas. The hours of the RE Adviser have been reduced to part time and the role of LNS will increase to provide collaborative support. Professional support for SACREs will continue unaffected. WASACRE will also provide support and is currently writing a briefing paper on a national approach to professional learning for RE. A conference is also planned. These approaches were welcomed by the teacher representative.
- RE Curriculum Content: A Member noted that RE has included Christianity and other principle religions and was concerned that the inclusion of other philosophical beliefs will dilute the teaching of Christianity. The inclusion of values and ethics was to be a

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purpose across the curriculum and not confined to religious education. The change of name from SACREs to SACs has been included in the Bill without consultation. The concerns were shared and these have been included in the consultation response. A response from the Children and Young People Committee is awaited.

- Support for staff: SACRE members sympathised with school staff who are struggling to plan the new curriculum when there is a lack of clarity. EAS has set up Central Teams and everyone who has an Hwb address will have access to all training. Clusters are also building up resources on their Sharepoint sites. It was observed that no faith schools are LNS schools which was considered an opportunity missed. LNS were appointed on an application basis; no faith schools applied. It was suggested that there will be lots of opportunities to contribute even if a school is not in a position to lead. Sharon Randall-Smith agreed to pass this message on to the EAS and also to point out that two primary schools is insufficient to raise the profile of RE in the region to the same level as other subjects. Members expressed concerns about support for schools.
- It was confirmed that work is in progress to write separate RE frameworks with the Church in Wales and Catholic Education Service in line with the Humanities curriculum. The concept of a dual curriculum is still under consideration by the Children and Young People Committee in the Senedd. WASACRE, NAPFRE and Catholic Education Service were invited to attend the Committee and this participation is available to view on Senedd TV.
- Collective Worship: Guidance on collective worship from WASACRE during COVID 19 has been circulated to schools.
- Holocaust Memorial Day (27th January 2021): The theme next year is "Be the light in the darkness". It was queried if there is anything organised in Monmouthshire that SACRE can be involved in. The RE Adviser will remind schools.
- GCSE/A Level examinations: These won't be held this academic year in favour of teacher managed classroom assessment that will be externally verified. This will generate the need for more support for schools.
- Estyn: Estyn is supporting schools via phone calls etc. Inspections are suspended awaiting the new curriculum. Lots of information for schools is available on the Estyn website.

5. To receive and note the Welsh Government consultation on Religion Values and Ethics and the Senedd Children Young People and Education Committee consultation on the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill

The consultation responses were noted. The response was submitted within the necessary timescale. The consultation exercise was launched during the Summer holidays when school staff and others were not working with a short timescale for response. This was considered unsatisfactory noting that many SACREs failed to respond.

A Member thanked the RE Adviser for compiling the response on behalf of SACRE noting that whilst the draft response was circulated for amendments there was little time available to consider making comments. Acknowledging the current circumstances, it was confirmed that in future, where possible, a SACRE meeting of either all members or a working group, would be arranged to consider consultation responses.

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6. To consider items for the next SACRE News Bulletin

SACRE Members were invited to provide articles for the SACRE Newsletter.

7. WASACRE business

- i. The draft minutes from WASACRE meetings 21st November 2019 held in Aberaeron were received and noted.
- ii. The draft minutes from WASACRE AGM held on 7th October 2020 (remote meeting) were received and noted.
- iii. The draft minutes of the ordinary WASACRE meeting held on 7th October 2020 (remote meeting) were received and noted.
- iv. To receive and note the report of the activities of WASACRE during 2019-2020
 - WASACRE has expressed written concerns to Welsh Government regarding lack of collaboration on the RVE Framework.
 - The new WASACRE website is due to be launched
 - WASACRE has written to WJEC to request removal of the cash in fee in the current circumstances
 - WASACRE has written to all RE teachers acknowledging the difficult times and offering its support and that of the local SACRE. SACRE Members were in favour of the letter being sent.
 - WASACRE has provided funding for blended learning resources
 - WASACRE has written to local authorities to survey how many have appointed non-religious representatives to its SACRE.
 - A research report on World Views compiled by the RE Council for England and Wales will be sent to SACRE members for information. Concern was expressed that the inclusion of world views, values and ethics and other philosophical views will reduce religious content lower than anywhere in the world. Members also offered assurance that there would be no lack of emphasis on religion, and that, in practice for many years, world views will be about religions.
 - It was explained that the "What Matters" statements will relate to Humanities and will be led by professional teaching staff to give a balanced view
- i. To note dates of future WASACRE meetings and confirm representation:
 - Spring – Caerphilly (TBC)
 - Summer – Powys (TBC)

8. To confirm the date of the next SACRE meetings for 2020 - 2021

The meeting ended at 11.17 am