

# Public Document Pack



County Hall  
Rhadyr  
Usk  
NP15 1GA

Tuesday, 6 June 2023

## Notice of meeting

# Standing Advisory Council for Religion, Values and Ethics (SAC)

Wednesday, 14th June, 2023 at 3.00 pm,  
Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk NP15 1GA and remote attendance

## AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Confirmation of the appointment by Council of the Cabinet Member for Education as Chair of SAC	
2.	Appointment of Vice Chair	
3.	Welcome and Apologies	
4.	To note the record of the last meeting held on 8th March 2023 (not quorate)	1 - 4
5.	SAC New legal status: Geraint Edwards, Solicitor	
6.	Membership and Future Recruitment Arrangements	
7.	Qualifications Wales Full 14-16 qualifications offer consultation  Qualifications Wales consultation: The full 14-16 qualifications offer  The closing date for the Qualifications Wales consultation on the full 14-16 qualifications offer is:  <b>Wednesday, 14 June 2023</b>  WASACRE has recorded a short video presentation to explain why this consultation is so important to RVE and to present the proposals being offered.  We hope that this video will help SACREs / SACs consider their own	

responses to the consultation. Also, for your information, we have included the draft response of WASACRE to this consultation in this email.

**Video link:**

<https://wasacre.org.uk/news/>

**Consultation links:**

English: <https://haveyoursay.qualifications.wales/hub-page/the-full-14-16-offer>

Welsh: <https://dweudeichdweud.cymwysterau.cymru/hub-page/cefndir-y-cynnig-llawn-14-16>

8. **Monmouthshire Inspection Reports (Summary)**
9. **EAS RVE Partner Update**
10. **Planning for the Annual Report**
11. **Arrangements to review the progress schools are making towards delivering RVE**
12. **WASACRE Business**
  1. Minutes of Spring WASACRE meeting (21<sup>st</sup> March 2023)
  2. WASACRE Summer Meeting - Monday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2023
13. **Any Other Business**
14. **Dates of Next and Future meetings**

13<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at 3.00pm  
6<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at 3.00pm  
13<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at 3.00pm

5 - 16

**Paul Matthews**

**Chief Executive**

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

County Councillor Martyn Groucutt	Lansdown;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Angela Sandles	Magor East with Undy;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Louise Brown	Shirenewton;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Paul Pavia	Mount Pleasant;	Welsh Conservative Party
Vacancy (Conservative Group)		
Vacancy (Independent Group)		

**Representing the Church in Wales (1)**

Rebecca Morteo

**Representing the Roman Catholic Church (1)**

Mr. A. Szwagrzak

**Representing Free Churches (4)**

Baptist Church: Revd. J. Greaves  
The Salvation Army: Vacancy  
Methodist Church: Vacancy  
Presbyterian Church: Mrs. S. Gooding

**Representing the Bahá'í Faith (1)**

Mrs S. Cave

**Representing the Buddhist Faith (1)**

Vacancy

**Representing the Hindu Faith (1)**

Vacancy

**Representing the Jewish Faith (1)**

Vacancy

**Representing the Sikh Faith (1)**

Vacancy

**Representing the Muslim Faith (1)**

Maddie Saraireh

## **Representing Non Religious Philosophical Convictions**

Chris Francis (Humanism)

## **Representing the Teachers Associations (7)**

4 x Vacancies

Mr. N. Jenkins

Mrs S. Hamar

Mrs C. Rhodes

## **Co-opted Members (2)**

Vacancy

Vacancy

## **R.E Advisor**

Hayley Jones (EAS)

## **Representing Chief Officer, Children and Young People**

Sharon Randall-Smith

## **Public Information**

### **Access to paper copies of agendas and reports**

A copy of this agenda and relevant reports can be made available to members of the public attending a meeting by requesting a copy from Democratic Services on 01633 644219. Please note that we must receive 24 hours notice prior to the meeting in order to provide you with a hard copy of this agenda.

### **Welsh Language**

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public through the medium of Welsh or English. We respectfully ask that you provide us with adequate notice to accommodate your needs.

# Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

## Our purpose

Building Sustainable and Resilient Communities

### Objectives we are working towards

- Giving people the best possible start in life
- A thriving and connected county
- Maximise the Potential of the natural and built environment
- Lifelong well-being
- A future focused council

## Our Values

**Openness.** We are open and honest. People have the chance to get involved in decisions that affect them, tell us what matters and do things for themselves/their communities. If we cannot do something to help, we'll say so; if it will take a while to get the answer we'll explain why; if we can't answer immediately we'll try to connect you to the people who can help – building trust and engagement is a key foundation.

**Fairness.** We provide fair chances, to help people and communities thrive. If something does not seem fair, we will listen and help explain why. We will always try to treat everyone fairly and consistently. We cannot always make everyone happy, but will commit to listening and explaining why we did what we did.

**Flexibility.** We will continue to change and be flexible to enable delivery of the most effective and efficient services. This means a genuine commitment to working with everyone to embrace new ways of working.

**Teamwork.** We will work with you and our partners to support and inspire everyone to get involved so we can achieve great things together. We don't see ourselves as the 'fixers' or problem-solvers, but we will make the best of the ideas, assets and resources available to make sure we do the things that most positively impact our people and places.

**Kindness:** We will show kindness to all those we work with putting the importance of relationships and the connections we have with one another at the heart of all interactions.



# Public Document Pack Agenda Item 4

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)/  
Standing Advisory Council (SAC) held  
at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK on Wednesday, 8th March, 2023 at  
10.00 am

### PRESENT:

#### COUNTY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

County Councillor Martyn Groucutt (Chair)  
County Councillor Paul Pavia  
County Councillor Louise Brown

#### FAITH REPRESENTATIVES

Sue Cave  
Suzanne Gooding  
Maddie Sareirah  
Ali Szwagrzak  
Chris Francis (Observing)

#### TEACHER REPRESENTATIVES

None

### OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Sharon Randall-Smith	Head of Achievement and Attainment
Wendy Barnard	Democratic Services Officer
Hayley Jones	Curriculum Partner (SACs and RVE)
Geraint Edwards	Solicitor

### APOLOGIES:

County Councillor Angela Sandles, Nick Pryor, Jonathan Greaves, Rebecca Morteo, Charlotte Rhodes, Suzanne Hamer and Neil Jenkins

#### 1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There was NO QUORUM due to there being no Teacher Representatives present therefore no decisions could be made. The notes of the meeting are not binding.

The Chair welcomed Maddie Saraireh, new Muslim representative to the meeting and Chris Francis, representing Humanism. Chris will be an observer until SAC is constituted.

#### 2. To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26th October 2022 and matters arising

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 2022 were confirmed as an accurate record but will also be presented to the next meeting for approval due to there being no quorum.

Matters Arising:

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)/ Standing Advisory Council (SAC) held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK on Wednesday, 8th March, 2023 at 10.00 am

Membership Update: In response to a query, it was explained that that NRPC membership has been considered by Full Council however the way the decision was passed wasn't lawful as an NRPC representative can only be appointed to SAC not SACRE. SAC has not yet been properly constituted. The next item to consider SAC Constitution and Terms of Reference seeks to rectify this position so the NRPC representative can be added. SAC will come into existence following changes to the constitution at the Council AGM in May. The opinion was expressed that to say it was not legal because SAC is not yet constituted is incorrect because SACRE continues until it is agreed to be SAC so the Council decision should stand. The Chair explained that the advice regarding the amendment to the Constitution at the County Council's AGM in May will be that there should be one body going forward combining SAC and SACRE to continue to fulfil its legacy duties around the teaching of religious education until it transitions wholly to RVE at the end of the academic year 2025/26. Members of SAC not previously members of SACRE would not be able to vote on matters relating to the teaching of religious education.

Inspection reports: Regarding provision of inspection reports, it was explained that Estyn has changed the way that it inspects and reports. Estyn no longer automatically reports on religious education and many Section 50 inspections have been suspended resulting in information normally gathered from inspection reports not being available as before. It is a matter for discussion how the relevant information is now captured so that SACRE/SAC can reassure itself that the curriculum is being adequately delivered in schools. Discussions with WASACRE about how best to share the information continue. Estyn inspectors will observe collective worship and may or may not report on it. Schools carry out self-evaluation and have been happy to provide us with the information. S50 schools can more easily provide due to external verification. Work with schools will continue to find a reasonable and workable way to retrieve this information. In the meantime, the RVE Adviser will collate information from recent Estyn reports for SACRE/SAC.

### **3. SAC Constitution and Terms of Reference**

The Legal Adviser introduced the report on the SAC Constitution and Terms of Reference proposing that the Monitoring Officer implements the proposed amendments to the MCC Constitution at the County Council AGM in May 2023 to formalise the establishment of SAC. Following presentation of the report, Members were invited to ask questions and to comment:

- A Member suggested that the report is reviewed in light of recent advice from the Welsh Government proposing that SACRE and SAC co-exist as the functions of SACRE need to continue until the summer of 2026. The constitution and term of reference should distinguish each body's functions with reference to the agreed syllabus for RE for SACRE and the agreed syllabus for RVE for SAC. Responsibilities for collective worship remain for SACRE and SAC plus the right of withdrawal from RE.
- Referring to the March 2022 report to Council, a Member suggested the NRPC representative only observes on SACRE and commented that no particular NRPC group had been determined by SAC and questioned if expressions of interest should be sought to ensure a full representation to move to a new SAC. The Chair noted that historically there has been no formal process to appoint members and suggested that a transparent and objective recruitment method is established. Regarding NRPC representation, expressions of interest were sought and Humanism was the only response received. Additionally, Humanism is part of the RVE syllabus.
- Referring to the report, the Legal Adviser indicated that the advice stands and disagreed that the wording "legacy matters" is insufficient as it will be possible to advise on legacy



## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)/ Standing Advisory Council (SAC) held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK on Wednesday, 8th March, 2023 at 10.00 am

matters as specified in statute as and when necessary. It was queried if there is a local Humanist group

- Responding to queries about SAC and SACRE, the Chair clarified that there will be one body. SACRE will sit within SAC to review RE until 2026. It was suggested that concerns are forwarded to the Monitoring Officer.
- A Member asked if clarification of the Welsh Government guidance could be sought. The Legal Adviser was asked to speak to the Monitoring Officer and if he thought necessary to seek clarification. If advice is taken from Welsh Government, it was requested that this is forwarded to the Councillor Pavia and Brown. It was requested that if the Monitoring Officer decides to contact Welsh Government for clarification, he should provide the advice obtained by Councillor Brown from Welsh Government and WASACRE.

#### **4. Membership Report**

The Membership report was received as per the list in the agenda.

Referring to making appointments to SAC, Members made the following points:

- The LA has responsibility to check that the appointee is representative of the organisation in question.
- A working group consisting of the Chair, Legal Adviser, RVE Adviser and Sharon Randall-Smith will work on a transparent and objective appointment method to seek representation from local groups for SAC like the process to appoint Local Authority School Governors. The group will report back to a future meeting.
- The Councillors will meet to address council vacancies.
- It was queried if, when forming the new body (SAC) if there would be a need to review all positions.

#### **5. EAS RVE Partner Update**

- The RVE Adviser will provide a summary of collective worship and assemblies for schools providing information on similarities and differences. This matter is also to be discussed by NAPFRE and WASACRE.
- The Welsh Government resources are not yet published.
- WASACRE will conduct a soft review of agreed syllabi across Wales to check they are in line with the ethos and spirit of the new curriculum.
- The Jewish History Association of South Wales is running training on its resources on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023. Details to be circulated.

#### **6. WASACRE Business**

- a) WASACRE: The minutes of Autumn meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2022 were noted.
- b) WASACRE Executive Committee Nominations: CC L. Brown is a member of the Executive Committee until 2025.
- c) WASACRE Letter: Welsh Government to undertake a short desk-based exercise, which involves looking at the text of the agreed syllabi for each local authority to get a sense of how faithful these are to the vision and ethos of RVE in the Curriculum for Wales. A letter was also circulated to thank everyone for the work on the Agreed Syllabus.
- d) WASACRE Spring Meeting. The meeting will be hosted virtually by Pembrokeshire SACRE and will take place on Tuesday 21st March. Four representatives may attend.

**MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

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Standing Advisory Council (SAC) held  
at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK on Wednesday, 8th March, 2023 at  
10.00 am**

**7. Any Other Business**

There was no additional business.

**8. Date of next and future meetings: 14th June 2023 at 3pm (Please note new time)**

The Legal Adviser explained that the next meeting will be SAC.

**The meeting ended at 11.01 am**



**Wales Association of SACREs meeting,  
Virtual via Microsoft Teams  
21st March 2023  
10.30am – 1.00pm.**

## Attendance

<p><b>Ynys Môn / Anglesey</b> Rheinallt Thomas (RT) Gwynedd Hughes (GH)</p> <p><b>Blaenau Gwent</b></p> <p><b>Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr / Bridgend</b> Alice Parry (AP) Edward Evans (EE)</p> <p><b>Caerffili/ Caerphilly</b></p> <p><b>Caerdydd / Cardiff</b></p> <p><b>Sir Gaerfyrddin / Carmarthenshire</b> Jennifer Harding-Richards (JHR)</p> <p><b>Ceredigion</b> Mary Davies (MD)</p> <p><b>Conwy</b> Collette Owen (CO) Phil Lord (PL)</p>	<p><b>Sir Ddinbych / Denbighshire</b> Collete Owen (CO) Phil Lord (PL)</p> <p><b>Sir y Fflint / Flintshire</b> Anna Stephens (AS) Debbie Owens (DO) Jane Borthwick (JB)</p> <p><b>Gwynedd</b> Sibani Roy (SR) Paul Rowlinson (PR) Eurfryn Davies (ED)</p> <p><b>Merthyr Tudful / Merthyr Tydfil</b></p> <p><b>Sir Fynwy / Monmouthshire</b> Louise Brown (LB)</p> <p><b>Castell-nedd Port Talbot / Neath and Port Talbot</b> Nia Jenkins (NJ) Rachel Samuel (RS) Wayne Carpenter (WC)</p> <p><b>Casnewydd / Newport</b> Hayley Jones (HJ) Huw Stephens (HS) Neeta Baicher (NB)</p>	<p><b>Sir Benfro / Pembrokeshire</b> Clare Campbell (CG) Sam Skerme-BlackHall (SB) Marc Tierney (MT) Mike James (MJ) Amanda Lawrence (AL) Clare Campbell (CC) Sian Rowles (SR) Jennifer Harding-Richards (JHR) Lydia Cheshire (LC)</p> <p><b>Powys</b> John Mitson (JM) Fiona Thomas (FT) John Meredith (JM)</p> <p><b>Rhondda Cynon Taf</b> Donna Graves (DG)</p> <p><b>Abertawe / Swansea</b> Jennifer Harding-Richards (JHR)</p> <p><b>Torfaen</b></p> <p><b>Bro Morgannwg / Vale of Glamorgan</b></p> <p><b>Wrecsam / Wrexham</b> Tania ap Siôn (TS) Libby Jones (LJ)</p> <p><b>NAPfRE</b></p> <p><b>EFTRE</b> Phil Lord (PL)</p>	<p><b>Observers:</b></p> <p><b>REMW</b> Paul Morgan (PM)</p> <p><b>WJEC</b> Andrew Pearce (APE)</p> <p><b>ESTYN</b> Gwawr Meirion (GM)</p> <p><b>Welsh Government</b></p> <p><b>REC</b> Kathy Riddick (KR)</p> <p><b>Church in Wales</b> Elizabeth Thomas (ET) Jennie Downes (JD)</p> <p><b>Catholic Education Service</b> Angela Keller (AK)</p> <p><b>Qualification Wales</b> Kate Russell (KRU) Philip Blaker (PB)</p> <p><b>Interfaith Network</b></p> <p><b>ADEW</b> University Of Wales Elin Stock (ES)</p> <p>USW Trinity St David Rachel Bendall (RB)</p> <p><b>Minutes (from recording)</b> Jo Nicholls (JNI)</p>
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## **Minutes of the meeting**

### **1. Introduction and welcome**

TaS welcomed everyone to the Spring meeting and thanked the Pembrokeshire Local Authority and SAC / SACRE for hosting the meeting. TaS thanked Lydia Cheshire and the team for their work in setting up this meeting.

TaS welcomed and introduced the Chair of Pembrokeshire SACRE - Cllr Sam Skyrme-Blackhall.

Cllr Sam Skyrme-Blackhall welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave the following introduction:

“Enabling young people to learn without judgements and prejudices, understand, grow and develop their own views and perspectives on all things is a privilege we should embrace. We gather towards the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> term of operating the new syllabus and no doubt there is much learning and experiences we can share throughout our time together. I am proud of the work being done in here in Pembrokeshire – supporting our Schools – and critically the work in our Schools – supporting our young people. From specific support for Early Years to working with Headteachers to share learning – we are all finding our way and I am grateful to our dedicated officers who are driving this forward with real commitment and purpose. I know that is a shared experience across Wales. Of course, we will adapt and flex as we find the best route forward – that is the nature of anything new. But in doing so, we need to remember our core values – the things that shaped the development of this new curriculum and keep them in mind as we embed this. Getting this right is so important – and in doing so we will truly help our young people to be healthy, confident individuals, leading fulfilling lives as ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world”.

Pembrokeshire SACRE shared the following two presentations:

- i)  [WASACRE 21.3.23.mp4 \(video\)](#)
- ii) [Religion Values and Ethics in Pembrokeshire](#)

### **2. Quiet reflection**

### **3. Apologies**

Apologies from the Executive Committee members – Vicky Barlow, Jennie Downes, Mathew Maidment, Paula Webber. Chris Abbas, Blaenau Gwent and Chris Owens, WJEC.

### **4. Minutes of the last meeting Microsoft Teams held on 16th November 2022**

RS – Fiona Thomas needs removing from the NPT SACRE attendee list.

The minutes on the last meeting were formally agreed.

### **5. Matters arising from minutes of the last WASACRE meeting**

- Item 7 part 4 – Welsh Government (WG) clarity on the date until which SAC and SACRE will need to co-exist.
- WG colleagues have clarified that the reference to these bodies needing to be in place until 2025 was intended to mean the 2025 academic year commencing in September which concludes in the summer of 2026, but they appreciate that the earlier response was potentially ambiguous in that regard and subject to interpretation.

## 6. Welsh Government matters:

### i) Meeting (15<sup>th</sup> December 2022)

Representation from WASACRE/NAPfRE - Tania ap Sion, Libby Jones, Rachel Samuel.

Rachel Samuel gave feedback on the outcomes of several agenda items as follows:

#### 1. SACRE annual reports – structure review

John Pugsley asked WASACRE to submit a proposal outlining what needs to be done for the Welsh Government review of Annual Reports. Funding can be offered for any work required. The proposal should be sent to John Pugsley and Kerry Davies who will make a proposal to Lloyd Hopkin and their legal team.

#### 2. Information communication update on RVE / Case studies for RVE Learning.

Explanation of what WG is looking for in terms of evidence of good practice.

To demonstrate 'what and how' RVE takes place in the classroom. The case studies will be produced in film form. Two different schools are needed to demonstrate visual activities, with resources and assessments being cut into the film afterwards. Kerry Davies would look at the filming brief that WG has provided to identify the requirements. This challenges NAPfRE colleagues to find the best examples and how to decide what could be shared. Links to examples of films to be shared with SACREs from a pilot carried out in Swansea to give an idea of what they are looking for.

#### 3. Update on Adjustments to RVE guidance on Hwb

The adjustments we have requested have been logged in for the next review cycle. In summer 2023 there will be a review with SACREs and other relevant bodies. The Legal Team has the final say if the modifications are accepted (Pat McCarthy) - WG emphasises that it has not been forgotten and will be addressed in due course. Kerry Jones to find out how the process will work to make sure it happens. John Pugsley to share the feedback from PMcC with the WASACRE Executive Committee representatives.

#### 4. Inquiry by local Authority - Termly activities in primary schools and the right to withdraw

JHR: Have had inquiries from schools regarding the compulsory nature of RVE for ages 3 -16. Especially affects primary schools at this time of year with nativity plays, Christmas stories etc. A small group of representatives in the community are asking that their children be taken out of these activities. We discuss with schools how to differentiate between RVE and joint worship and the ethos and culture of the school.

We are aware that there is no right of withdrawal but we are asking for clarification on how we differentiate between those aspects for primary colleagues.

WG response:

Advice is the same as for previous application in July 2022.

- Schools should have clear lines of communication with parents, ensuring they understand what is included and why.
- Where parents (or even learners) seem to have concerns about specific learning it will help to discuss sensitively with parents and understand where these concerns have arisen and explore how they can be addressed. It is very possible that these doubts are due to a misunderstanding about what is covered or what is required by the Curriculum for Wales.
- From September within the Curriculum for Wales, it is clear that there is no legal right to withdraw (which means, unlike in the past, parents have a right to have their request to withdraw their child granted), but of course some parents may try to take their children out of certain aspects. The school has discretion as to how to manage that and will need to come to a decision with the learner and the family. Obviously, that is in everyone's interest - naturally, we don't want learners to be taken out of the mainstream by parents entirely because of fears about the curriculum.

Additional advice was given:

- Identify the issue
- Is it a matter of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)?
- If it is RSE, draw the schools' attention to the expectations regarding the code and the RSE guidelines, in particular:
  - The importance of pluralism – i.e. being able to assure the parents that teaching is presented in a multiple manner and this is the school's legal duty
  - The requirement of the code to ensure that a range of views and beliefs are considered in the context of RSE
  - The importance of close lines of communication with parents and carers on these issues
  - Refer the LA and the school to the Frequently Asked Questions on Relationship and Sexuality Education as it may be helpful.

The response of those present from WASACRE and NAPfRE was that we do not think the question has been adequately answered - How can schools differentiate between RVE, collective worship, and the ethos and culture of the school, in order to avoid complaints and issues relating to removal back?

#### 5. Identify support and resources for RVE

WASACRE was asked to produce a general map to show what is already offered in terms of support and resources in Wales. John Pugsley to send a resource document to support that work. JP and KD need to be kept up to date by WASACRE.

#### 6. Resources of the Council of Free Churches

This is something for the Governance side within WG. It is not directly related to classroom practice. The information will be shared with Claire Horton from WG to see if there is anything that WG can support in reference to the documents.

## 7. RSE Judicial Review Update

When this meeting took place, WG was still waiting for an outcome. JP confirmed that as soon as he gets something that goes to the public he will send it to us first. We now know this outcome – the court sided in favour of WG and for RSE to remain mandatory for all learners. The parents have started their appeal. We still don't know how it will affect RVE if the appeal is successful.

### ii) Informal agreed syllabi monitoring process

Tania ap Sion reported on the informal agreed syllabi monitoring process / review, as follows.

On 15 December 2022, the WG invited WASACRE to undertake: “an informal monitoring process of the agreed syllabi for each LA to get a sense of how faithful these are to the vision and ethos of RVE in the Curriculum for Wales”.

This is part of the supportive approach that the WG is taking during the period of curriculum roll-out, recognising the importance of being supportive earlier rather than later. In practice, the review is a short desk-based exercise, which involves looking at the text of the agreed syllabi for each local authority. It goes no further than reviewing the texts themselves. At the end of March, a report will be submitted to the Welsh Government on the findings. After this, sometime in the near future, the Welsh Government has confirmed that we will be able to use relevant parts of this research to share practice among the local authorities – including possibly showcasing particular examples. Within this, the importance of local determination should always be kept to the fore while also seeing the value of sharing practice within that. The review process itself has been rigorously set up and approved by the Welsh Government:

1. There has been careful selection of the 6 Team members who are well placed to carry out this review;
2. We created a proforma based on a sample of five agreed syllabi, covering language, syllabus content, clarity, local context, and editing. This proforma was then used for all the agreed syllabi to ensure consistency in approach.
3. We also ensured that each agreed syllabus was reviewed by at least 2 or 3 team members at the level of the individual, small group, and then as a whole Team.
4. No team member reviewed any agreed syllabi that they had been personally involved in, and we allocated random numbers to the agreed syllabi throughout the review process and report writing.

We are very grateful to all 22 SACs for sharing with us their agreed syllabus so promptly, and we hope that you will find this a really helpful exercise.

I am also very grateful to all the members of the Team who have worked together so effectively and well over the past seven weeks to ensure that we complete the review and submit the Report to the Welsh Government on time.

## 7. Report on Estyn meeting (14<sup>th</sup> February 2023) – Monitoring standards and progress - WASACRE Executive members present: AP, RS, MM, and LJ

Alice Parry gave feedback to the meeting that WASACRE had requested a meeting with ESTYN to receive an update on the plans for monitoring RVE within the Curriculum for Wales. WASACRE Members were grateful of the briefing paper that was shared in advance of the Autumn Meeting in November 2022 and wanted to discuss the following items in more detail:

### 1. Monitoring the provision of RVE in schools and regard to the Agreed Syllabus

Estyn is not a monitoring organisation. However, Inspection teams will be looking at the broad curriculum plan of each school it inspects, and if a particular element of the curriculum was missing, e.g. mandatory RVE, this would be raised with the school and would be included in the final report. They may consider whether RVE is being taught within the spirit of the CfW, but would not be specifically monitoring objective, critical and pluralistic approach and delivery of RVE.

### 2. Monitoring standards and progression in RVE

Very rarely would a report include a comment on standards and progression within a specific subject. There may be comments on the acquisition of particular skills etc. in certain subjects, as way of example of progression, which could include RVE. Inspectors are looking at standards and progression overall. Data is for the school only, to inform their own planning. Colleagues made it very clear that schools should not produce data especially for Estyn to prove that their learners are making progress or are achieving set targets or standards. Every school should know every learner, in the sense of, where they are, where they need to be, and how they can get there. If inspectors look at school data, it will be to build a picture of whether, and how well, the school knows its learners. Inspectors will not be looking for 'evidence' of progression, i.e. comparing standards with other schools or classes or years groups etc. It wants to see how the school uses its own data to inform their planning for improvement and progression.

### 3. Collective worship

Estyn colleagues shared the 2017 Estyn guidance on collective worship which all Inspectors are given prior to an inspection. This includes components which collective worship may incorporate and also FAQ that may be helpful to schools. The school context is taken in to consideration regarding collective worship in both primary and secondary settings and pointed out the reference in the guidance to 'thought for the day' and reflection time as well as prayers and more traditional forms of worship. Estyn colleagues were not aware or any renewed interest in collective worship within inspection teams, and are aware that opportunities for SMSC development can be provided elsewhere in the curriculum and within the ethos of the school.

### 4. Effective practice

'Green shoots' are being identified during inspection visits, but it is still early days. Teams are seeing some appropriate RVE provision in line with the guidance.



Engagement visits are taking place but there hasn't been any focusing on RVE yet. There are a variety of channels through which possible engagement visits can be identified. There could be an EV in the future focussing on RVE or C/W but that would depend on whether those specific elements are identified as an area of interest for an EV. When an EV takes place a report is published on the Estyn website.

In conclusion, colleagues from WASACRE and Estyn felt that the meeting had been beneficial and all agreed that a twice yearly meeting would be arranged between the two bodies in future. WASACRE colleagues invited Estyn colleagues to provide updates at the WASACRE main meetings as and when needed.

## **8. Professional Learning presentation**

Libby Jones gave an update on this agenda item and shared a clip from one of the RVE playlists from the first batch of five professional learning resources that have now been published on Hwb, called, 'What's new'. The links to the resources on Hwb will be shared with SACREs for wider distribution. She reported as follows:

We are very grateful to our Welsh Government colleague Rachael Hicks for pushing these resources forward, through to publication. We have waited a long time for them, but it is worth the wait as the quality of these resources is exceptional. I have already shared a clip from the, 'What's new for secondary schools' playlist which Alice Parry created and features in. Today I am going to present the, 'What's new for Headteachers' playlist. There will be a policy Insight event held on 25<sup>th</sup> April (link in the chat) which will showcase these resources along with other useful resources that schools and SACREs can use.

LJ shared her screen and presented the playlist, stopping on specific pages to draw attention to some interesting and useful information, including, the description of 'have regard to', self-evaluation, implications for Headteachers, reflections and questions, and the case studies. The Headteacher's playlist also has the same introductory sections and information as the other playlists in this first batch, such as the welcome page, contents, aims and critical engagement pages.

Link for policy insight event: <https://hwb.gov.wales/professional-development/policy-insight-events/>

Links for the bilingual resources on Hwb:

English: <https://hwb.gov.wales/repository/resource/eef7e399-93bb-4d7c-ab68-145c93f4c6d3/en>

Cymraeg: <https://hwb.gov.wales/repository/resource/eef7e399-93bb-4d7c-ab68-145c93f4c6d3/cy>

Members raised questions regarding 'have regard to' and agreed syllabi, which LJ clarified and members also shared very positive comments about the resources. One question was raised regarding SACRE members having access to Hwb. The resources can be accessed without needing a log in, but it was suggested that Members seek advice and support from their local authority.

## **9. Conversations with England colleagues (NASACRE, REC, Regional RE Hubs)**

TaS reported that conversations are currently taking place with England colleagues. Education in Wales is becoming increasingly different to England with the introduction of the Curriculum for Wales. This raises a number of issues concerning how we value one another and how we work together.

### **NASACRE**

The WASACRE Executive welcomed an invitation from NASACRE to restart conversations. A meeting was held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023 with the Chair of NASACRE, Linda Rudge and Sue Holmes the Secretary and members of the WASACRE Executive Committee -TaS, EE and LJ.

The purpose of the meeting was to restart the sharing of recent events and updates and to explore the potential links between the two associations. It was mutually recognised that although the associations had so much in common there was also so much divergence.

To summarise –possible areas for further conversations were identified:

- 1) NASACRE occasionally receives enquiries from SACs and SACREs from Wales about professional learning and the NASACRE annual conference. It was resolved to put LJ in touch with the NASACRE administrator to discuss these questions as it is important to have the correct lines of communications.
- 2) To explore the possibility of including an item at the NASACRE conference where there might be mutual cross overs and where WASACRE could contribute usefully.
- 3) NASACRE is going to share their newsletter which is distributed 3 / 4 times a year.

The aim is to put in place more regular conversations and develop the relationship between NASACRE and WASACRE.

### **REC**

In February WASACRE received a request for a meeting from Indy Nottage, Executive Officer for the RE council for England and Wales to discuss how the REC can best support WASACRE in our Wales context. TaS, LJ (WASACRE Executive Members) and Paula Webber (Chair of NAPfRE, WASACRE Executive member) met with REC on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

It was an open, frank, and positive conversation about our concerns regarding the relationship between WASACRE and REC. WASACRE have worked closely with REC on a number of projects in the past but currently it appears that the relationship is not working as effectively as it could.

The outcome of the meeting was for the REC to organise a meeting with representatives of the Wales focused REC organisations i.e., WASACRE, Church in Wales, REMW, members of the REC board - Kathy Riddick, the Chair Sarah Lane Court and Indy Nottage. The meeting is to be arranged in April 2023.

The aim is to create a structure to enable communication and collaboration within the REC over the long term. The structure needs to reflect the needs of the organisations in Wales and ultimately Wales learners. There has been a suggestion to set up a REC Wales forum.

### **Regional RE Hubs**

Both the Chair and Vice Chairs of WASACRE and NAPfRE received an email from the lead director for a new online platform called Regional RE Hubs asking what we wanted to see on it for the Wales area.

The background of the Regional RE hubs is as follows:

The 1<sup>st</sup> year was funded by Dept of Education in England to address specific England RE requirements. Now in its 2<sup>nd</sup> year, it is funded by charities and has one more year of funding. After this it hopes to receive further funding from Dept of Education, England.

The steering group includes organisations such as REC, RE Today, AERIAC, AWRI and NASACRE. The aim of the regional hubs is to improve communication between teachers, professional development, resource providers and research communities. It is an information exchange to increase accessibility to support, training, and resources for the regions. They also run a course which is being accessed by places of worships and other places in Wales which awards an RE hub accreditation.

A meeting was held on the 12th January 2023. The WASACRE Executive members shared their concern that the Regional RE hubs have been developed without any direct communication with WASACRE or NAPfRE. This is an issue that must be addressed and raises the questions as to how WASACRE and NAPfRE are perceived by these groups in England and how communications can be improved. It raised questions - what are our needs in Wales? How can we identify our needs? How to deal with them?

RT: Two members of REMW have met with Indy Nottage. REMW also commented that this initiative has come as a surprise.

TaS: Confirmed that colleague JHR has been involved with the RE hubs.

LB: REC has always been England based. LB wondered whether it would be better that it is called REC for England. All research and documents are based on England. It would be another layer of work for WASACRE.

TaS: It is always valuable to collaborate and share practice with our colleagues in England and Europe but we must consider what is meaningful to us in Wales.

#### **10. EFTRE Conference (August 2023)**

PL gave an update and shared [the link to the EFTRE conference](#) 'Bridges over Troubled Waters – RE in changing times' which is to be held in Rome on 24-27 August 2023. TaS, with European colleagues, will be presenting the findings of a European wide project, impact of Covid on teaching RE. Other presenters include Kathryn White from Culham St. Gabriel's Trust. The programme also includes workshops and potential off-site visits to a synagogue, non-Catholic cemetery, catacombs and a Muslim community.

PL, TaS and possibly LJ will be attending the conference.

WASACRE would like to support a teacher from Wales to attend and we would ask them to provide feedback on their experience on their return. TAS mentioned that this is an excellent opportunity for a teacher and confirmed that WASACRE will fully fund the travel, conference attendance and accommodation.

**ACTION:** If any teachers are interested, please contact WASACRE, before the Easter break.

#### **11. Up-dates:**

- **REC**  
 KR: REC is in its 50<sup>th</sup> year with an in-person celebration planned at the start of May. REC is refocusing on how to obtain the maximum benefit from members. If REC are to continue to represent Wales, it requires a permanent member of the board to represent Wales. Serious thought is required about the benefit in this relationship.  
 The continued work on the religion and world views resources is taking up a lot of REC's time, a project which is focused on England. We could look at and see if the document is of interest to the curriculum for Wales.
- **EFTRE**  
 PL encourages everyone to look at the website, there are interesting reports available. There are studies that could be done with secondary schools on the nature of RE education systems around Europe.
- **REMW**  
 REMW met with Indy Nottage.  
 REMW aim to revisit the paper previously presented to WASACRE. This paper described the potential changes in the nature of REMW with a view to making progress on this matter.
- **NAPfRE**  
 The PL working group are looking at the right of withdrawal and the advice that SACREs and head teachers may give. Any outcomes will be passed on to WASACRE.
- **IFN**  
 No update
- **Estyn**  
 14<sup>th</sup> February meeting already reported earlier in the meeting.
- **WJEC**
  - LJ read out a report from Christopher Owens:
    - The WJEC Autumn Professional Learning formerly known as CPD for GSCE Religious Studies was successfully completed in Swansea, Cardiff and Llandudno in December 2022 with additional online PL in January 2023. Materials from the PL events are available on the WJEC website.
    - WJEC submitted a detailed response to the Welsh Government's consultation on the proposals for the new GSCE Religious Studies for start of teaching in Sept 2025.
    - WJEC's working deadline is completion of the new specification with specimen assessment materials for Sept 2024, with the first teaching scheduled for Sept 2025.
    - Disappointingly there has been a decline in entry of RE across all examination levels for the summer series 2023.
    - Entry for AS Religious Studies dropped by 350 candidates from pre covid levels and this has rolled into advanced level studies.
    - At GSCE level there has been a very significant decline in entry for the summer 2023 series of around 6,500 candidates. Any decline is a cause for concern not least for future uptake of AS and advanced levels and has further implications for higher education.

TaS stated that the decline in candidates is to be an agenda item for a future meeting.

RS mentioned that all GSCE, AS and AL examinations this summer in Religious Studies have had a pre-release information gone out to schools on certain areas in the syllabi that should be given greater attention. RS is happy to circulate the links to SACREs.

**ACTION:** RS to share this link with SACREs

- **Report from the Executive Committee held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

TaS confirmed there was nothing further to report that hadn't already been covered on the agenda.

## **12. Correspondence**

LJ reported on the following correspondence:

- Received correspondence from Education Workforce Council (EWC) asking WASACRE to nominate members for the EWC. This needs to be taken to the WASACRE Executive Committee.
- Received correspondence from the Children, Young People and Education Committee (CYPE) stating they are currently undertaking a long-term enquiry into the implementation of the two key educational reforms during the last Senedd which is the Curriculum Assessment Wales at 2021 and the Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal Act 2018.
- Over the course of the sixth Senedd the Committee will carry out a series of short focus thematic check-ins. Each check-in will include engagement activities and scrutiny of a Welsh Government Minister. The first of these check-ins took place in spring/ summer 2022 and further information is available via a link. This link can be shared with SACREs.

**ACTION:** WASACRE to share this link with SACREs.

## **WASACRE Elections**

There are 2 places available on the WASACRE Executive Committee, nominations from SACs and SACREs need to be with LJ or AP by Friday 31st March. The list of nominees will be circulated to SACs and SACREs by Friday 28<sup>th</sup> April. Nominees should be available to attend the Exec Committees meetings regularly should they be successfully elected at the AGM.

## **13. Any other business (to be agreed in advance of the meeting with the Chair)**

KRU, Qualification Wales has been leading on the development of GSCE of Religious Studies and dealing with the WASCRE responses to the consultation. KRU informed WASACRE of the new consultation that is now out which is called 'The Full Offer', these are qualifications (entry level, level 1 etc) that support the new curriculum in Wales.

One question within the consultation links to whether there should be a specific qualification linked to the RVE guidance.

KRU encourages WASACRE to share the consultation link with RS teachers for their feedback. The more responses received the more valuable it is. The consultation is open until June 2023.

KRU thanked WASACRE for all its work in relation to the GSCE consultation.

HS congratulated all those who have spent a lot of time and effort using their expertise in serving us in their capacity as WASACRE.

MJ seconded HS's kind words and thanked the Committee for all of their hard which is very much appreciated.

TaS appreciated this recognition of WASACRE's work.

NB wished the Bahai community a very happy new year.

**14. Date for next meeting: Summer Term, Denbighshire.**

This will be an online meeting on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

TaS thanked Pembrokeshire for hosting and thanked the attendees.