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**MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the meeting of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)  
held in Rooms 6 & 7, Innovation House, Wales 1 Business Park, Magor. NP26 3DG on  
Friday, 13th October, 2017 at 1.30 pm**

**PRESENT:** Chair: Mrs. N. Baicher (Sikh Faith)

County Councillors: L.Brown, A. Easson, M.Lane, P.Pavia, J.Watkins  
and A. Webb

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

Church in Wales	-	Dr. A. Daly
Free Church Council	-	Revd. Dr. P. Baines
Hindu Faith	-	Mr. S. Sharma
Teachers Associations	-	Mr. A. Jones
		Mr. S. Oram
		Ms. K. Christofi
		Ms. C. Cooper
		Ms. S. Perry-Phillips
Co-opted Member	-	Ms. K. Fitter

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Gill Vaisey	RE Consultant
Richard Williams	Democratic Services Officer

**APOLOGIES:**

Mr. R. Cottrell, Major N. Andrews, Mrs. S. Cave, Ngakpa Namgyal Chatral, Mrs. R. Davies, Ms. M. Millington, T. Thomas and Sharon Randall-Smith

**1. Election of Chair**

We elected Neeta Baicher as Chair.

**2. Appointment of Vice-Chair**

We appointed County Councillor L. Brown as Vice-Chair.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

**4. Confirmation of Minutes**

The minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Chair subject to a minor amendment to minute 16 – remove ‘and noted’ from the sentence.

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Arising from the minutes, the following points were identified:

- In response to summary inspection reports and self-evaluation reports in respect of voluntary aided schools, it was noted that a good relationship existed between the local Authority and the schools. It was customary for the RE Consultant, on behalf of the SACRE Committee, to write to the head teacher of all schools in Monmouthshire that have received an Estyn inspection and submitted a self-evaluation report. However, with regard to voluntary aided schools, the Diocesan Director of Education, Dr. Annette Daly, suggested she would appreciate receiving a copy of such letters.
- Pen Portraits yet to be received should be emailed to the Clerk to SACRE by Friday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2017.
- Rhian Davies is one of the Lead Practitioner supporting the implementation of the new Religious Studies GCSE and had been appointed by the Education Achievement Service (EAS). A network meeting had been held in June 2017 where various items were discussed including the pressure on teachers that the new GCSE specification is creating. In response to a question regarding the new GCSE, it was noted that the course was implemented in September 2017 and would be examined in summer of 2018 for short course candidates and summer 2019 for the full course. The new course has significant content change which is a challenge for teachers and students. Rhian Davies had also created a Christianity and Hindu textbook. On behalf of the SACRE Committee, the Chair congratulated Rhian.
- The Chair stated that the faith communities would support the Lead Practitioner with regard to the implementation of the new Religious Studies GCSE.
- Rhian Davies, along with other Lead Practitioners, had attended a WJEC meeting to share developments across the different consortia. Rhian Davies is currently working with West Monmouthshire Comprehensive School and Newport High School to provide support.
- In response to a question raised, it was noted that the WJEC website provides copies of past RE papers in respect of GCSE, AS and A level, as well as providing legacy specifications.
- There has been positive sharing of resources between lead practitioners and GwE, the fully bilingual School Effectiveness and Improvement Service for North Wales. Details will be available in the SACRE newsletter.
- The RE Consultant will be facilitating a SACRE training event in the new year.

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### **5. Feedback from a presentation to Cardiff SACRE: RE Days for Year 6 Pupils in Monmouthshire Schools**

The RE Consultant provided the SACRE Committee with feedback from a presentation that she and other SACRE members had made to Cardiff SACRE regarding RE Days for year 6 pupils in Monmouthshire's schools.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- Monmouthshire SACRE has an excellent reputation across Wales. A contributing factor is due to the range of faith representatives that sit on the SACRE Committee. Faith representatives actively support Monmouthshire's schools via events such as the RE Days for Year 6 Pupils.
- Cardiff SACRE had asked that a presentation be made to their SACRE in respect of this event. The presentation was made by Soam Sharma, Sue Cave, Revd. Dr. Peter Baines, Neeta Baicher and Andrew Jones.
- The RE Days event provides a number of workshops whereby pupils can learn about different faiths.

On behalf of the SACRE Committee, the Chair thanked the RE Consultant for her presentation and looked forward to more of these events being held in the future.

### **6. To consider and approve the draft SACRE Annual Report 2016 - 2017**

We received the SACRE Annual Report dated 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- The report needs to be adopted by SACRE before it is forwarded to Welsh Government.
- In response to a question raised regarding guidance on managing the withdrawal of pupils from RE, the RE Consultant informed the Committee that the document has been translated into Welsh and was at the design and print stage. When printed, the document will be sent to all schools in Wales with a view to looking to sell the document further afield. The document will support schools and also provide guidance to parents. The document incorporates the response from a wide range of major faiths and Christian denominations. SACRE members will be able to view the document when it is complete.
- The report to be amended as follows:
  - Mr. R. Williams Clerk to SACRE.
- Inspection reports and self-evaluation – In response to a comment in that there had been no reference made to Religious Education in Estyn Inspection reports,

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the RE Consultant informed the Committee that since 2010, with the implementation of the new Estyn Framework, it had not been within the remit of Estyn to comment on individual subjects. However, the RE Consultant would incorporate into the SACRE Annual Report the concerns raised regarding this matter.

- Attendance at WASACRE Meetings – it was noted that Monmouthshire SACRE has nominated representatives to attend WASACRE meetings. However, if a nominated representative is unable to attend a WASACRE meeting then a substitute from the Committee may attend. The host SACRE may invite all of its SACRE Members to attend.
- Chair of SACRE:
  - Former County Councillor Hacket Pain had been Chair of SACRE for nine years.
  - Reference was made to the wording in the document under paragraph 2.6, the sub heading - Chair of SACRE. Discussion took place about the wording of the paragraph whereby some County Councillor representatives suggested some amendments. Other members felt that the wording was appropriate and should remain as written with the additional wording about the length of time as Chair having already been added by the RE Consultant. It was agreed by majority that the paragraph would remain.

We resolved to adopt the draft SACRE Annual Report 2016-2017 and to include the points raised, as identified in this minute.

#### **7. Curriculum development update**

We received a verbal update by the RE Consultant regarding Curriculum Development. In doing so, the following points were noted:

- The good working relationship with Welsh Government is continuing.
- The RE Consultant and her peers have attended a number of curriculum development meetings including with Pioneer Schools.
- The Welsh Government has commissioned a comprehensive paper regarding Pioneer Schools, written by NAPfRE and WASACRE. The paper, reflected on what is good RE and making reference to spiritual development, had been submitted a week ago and had been sent to the Pioneer Schools.
- Examples of progression have been looked at from ages 3 to 16.
- The RE Consultant and her peers have been invited to present to the Pioneer Schools at a convention on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

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Having received the verbal update, the following points were noted:

- Concern was expressed that Religious Education was being incorporated into the Humanities area of the curriculum, which could lead to the teaching of RE being weakened.
- Concern was expressed about some of the failings of the curriculum in Scotland. It was noted that measures were being put in place to ensure that similar issues do not occur in Wales.

#### **8. Draft minutes of the WASACRE meeting dated 7th July 2017**

We received the draft WASACRE minutes dated 7<sup>th</sup> July 2017.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- An Estyn representative had suggested that there was a need for teachers to have training about religions from meeting with faith representatives.
- Estyn had submitted a questionnaire to SACRE's across Wales for completion.
- Some SACRE members expressed concern that a request had been made by Humanists UK for one of its representatives to sit on Monmouthshire SACRE. Other SACRE members stated that as the purpose of the SACRE Committee was to advise on Religious Education and that as Humanism is a part of the RE curriculum, particularly for GCSE, it would be very valuable to have a representative of Humanists UK as a member of SACRE. A Member of the SACRE Committee considered that a representative from Humanists UK was not legally entitled to sit on a SACRE Committee. However, the RE Consultant advised that as a SACRE can include co-opted members, a representative of Humanists UK could join a SACRE committee in this capacity.

#### **9. To note the appointments made to the WASACRE Executive Committee**

We noted the appointments made to the WASACRE Executive Committee and that Gill Vaisey is now Vice Chair.

#### **10. Future WASACRE meetings**

Future WASACRE meetings will be held on:

- Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2017 at the Civic Centre, Bridgend.
- Friday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2018 at the Civic Centre, Swansea.

#### **11. September 2017 News Bulletin**

We received the September 2017 SACRE news bulletin.

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**12. Information briefings from members for inclusion in the next SACRE News Bulletin**

SACRE Members were encouraged to forward any items that they might have for the next SACRE news bulletin to the RE Consultant.

Future news bulletins will be prepared via a shared process in which support will be provided via another RE Consultant.

Items received for the next bulletin include:

- An update from Sue Cave.
- St. David's Cathedral Visits.
- RE Ideas.
- An article from the Chair, Neeta Baicher.

**13. To agree dates and venue for future meetings**

The next meeting will be held at Innovation House, Magor on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018 at 1.30pm.

**The meeting ended at 3.40 pm.**