

**MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Standing Advisory Council on  
Religious Education held at County Hall, Usk  
Friday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2015 at 1:30pm**

**PRESENT:** County Councillors: E.J. Hacket Pain and D.W.H. Jones

**Representing the Roman Catholic Church**  
Sister Denise O'Donnell

**Representing the Baha'i Faith**  
Mrs. S. Cave

**Representing the Hindu Faith**  
Mr S. Sharma

**Representatives of the Teachers' Associations:**  
Mrs. R. Davies  
Ms. C. Cooper  
Ms. S. Perry – Phillips  
Mrs. J. Thomas  
Mrs. A. Wiggins  
Ms. M. Millington

**Co-opted Member:**  
Mrs. K. Fitter

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Ms. G. Vaisey	-	R.E. Consultant
Mr R. Williams	-	Democratic Services Officer

**1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

We elected County Councillor E.J. Hacket Pain as Chairman.

**2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

We appointed Mrs. S. Cave as Vice-Chairman.

**3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor A. Easson, Revd. Dr. P. Baines, Ngakma Shé-zér Khandro, Mrs. F. Jilani, Mrs. N. Baicher and Mr. A. Jones

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest recorded.

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## **5. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education dated 27<sup>th</sup> March 2015 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- Inspection reports – The R.E. Consultant had held positive dialogue with Mr. Murphy and an invitation had been extended to attend the Head Teachers meeting. The SACRE Termly bulletin would be forwarded to him by The R.E. Consultant.
- The R.E. Consultant has written to the under-five settings and schools to congratulate them on their good practice. A recommended resource list to further encourage provision of religious education was also included with the letter.
- Sue Hall is going to make the provision of religious education a focus of her regular visits to nursery settings next year.
- Artefact Loan Service – The R.E. Consultant had contacted the five schools that were housing the artefacts and it was noted that these schools were using them in their lessons. However, other schools have not requested to use the artefacts in their lessons. The R.E. consultant would write to Monmouthshire's schools reminding them of the locations of the artefacts and that they were available to be 'booked out' to be used in lessons.
- Withdrawal Clause – The R.E. Consultant is planning to write guidance for schools on managing the withdrawal of pupils from RE.
- The next WASACRE meeting will be held at the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Offices on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2015. Monmouthshire County Council will be hosting the WASACRE meeting in the Spring of 2017.

## **6. THE DONALDSON REVIEW**

We received a copy of the SACRE response to the Donaldson Review.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- One of the teachers present expressed concern that the review was recommending that Religious Education (R.E) be placed in with Humanities. However, it was noted that there were advantages and disadvantages to this proposal as discussed at the previous SACRE meeting:
  - Advantages – R.E. would be regarded as another subject with equal parity.
  - Disadvantage – If we lose SACRE we may lose the avenues for supporting schools in R.E.
- R.E. will remain as a statutory requirement.

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- It might be better for R.E. to be a part of the national curriculum.
- Next stage – to receive a statement from the Welsh Government in the Summer of 2015.
- WASACRE has secured two twice yearly meetings with the Welsh Government regarding this and other matters.

**7. PRESENTATION BY SUE CAVE: PILGRIMAGE TO HAIFA**

We received a presentation by Sue Cave regarding her nine day pilgrimage to Haifa in November 2014.

On behalf of the SACRE Committee, the Chairman thanked Sue for providing an interesting and informative presentation.

**8. WASACRE**

The following information was noted:

**Minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2015**

We received the draft minutes of the WASACRE meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2015. In doing so, the following points were noted:

- Wales is no longer represented on the R.E. Council for England and Wales. Dialogue was ongoing regarding this matter.
- The effectiveness of SACRE's had been looked at previously. Work has been undertaken and a report could be presented to the SACRE Committee at the Autumn 2015 meeting.
- The new Welsh Baccalaureate has impinged on RE time allocation in some schools across Wales. One secondary school teacher representative present reported that in her school from September 2015 all students will study RS Full Course which means that time has been gained due to the introduction of the Welsh Baccalaureate. The second secondary teacher in attendance reported that in her school pupils who don't choose R.E. at Key Stage 4 study some R.E. via the Welsh Baccalaureate which is taught by form tutors. However, it is difficult to monitor the R.E. skills being covered via this method. The R.E. Consultant suggested she could contact the other schools in the authority to ascertain provision in their schools regarding this matter.
- Pupils who don't choose R.E. at Key Stage 4 study some R.E. via the Welsh Baccalaureate which is taught by form tutors. However, it is difficult to monitor the R.E. skills available via this method. The R.E. Consultant could contact the other school representatives on SACRE to ascertain their views regarding this matter.
- Ongoing discussions were held between WASACRE and the Welsh Government regarding matters relating to R.E. and collective worship.

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- Estyn is required to monitor and report on spiritual, moral, social, and cultural developments (SMSC) but there is no requirement to comment on collective worship. A presentation will be made to the next WASACRE meeting in September 2015.

**Executive Committee Members**

- The two positions on the Executive Committee will be filled by Councillor E. Galsworthy (Merthyr Tydfil SACRE) and Ms. E. Ruth Davies (SACRE Gwynedd) on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2015.
- Mr. P. Lord (Denbighshire SACRE) will become Vice-Chair of WASACRE on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

**9. INFORMATION BRIEFINGS**

- The martyrdom anniversary of Guru Arjan, the fifth Guru, falls in June, the hottest month in India. He was tortured to death under the orders of Mughal Emperor, Jahangir, on the complaint of a Hindu banker Chandu Lal, who bore a personal enmity with Guru, at Lahore on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1606. Celebrations consist of Kirtan, Katha and Langar in the Gurdwara. Because of the hot summer, a chilled sweetened drink made from milk, sugar, essence and water is freely distributed in Gurdwaras and in neighbourhoods to everybody irrespective of their religious belief as a sign and honour of the humble Guru who happily accepted his torture as a will of Waheguru and made no attempt to take any action.
- A member of staff at a school had been confirmed in school by the Bishop with the whole school in attendance.
- 11 of 26 children in another school had also been confirmed.

**10. LETTER FROM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION MOVEMENT WALES (REMW)**

We received a request from Religious Education Movement Wales (REMW) for REMW flyers to be forwarded to all primary schools within Monmouthshire.

We resolved not to support this request.

**11. DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

We agreed that the next meetings of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education would be held at Innovation House, Magor (subject to availability) at 1.30pm on the following dates:

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2015  
Friday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2016  
Friday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2016

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We were informed that Mrs J. Thomas was retiring shortly and would be replaced by Mr. S. Oram. On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman wished her a happy retirement.

**The meeting ended at 3.15pm**