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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the meeting of Standing Advisory Council for Religion, Values and Ethics
(SAC) held
at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK on Tuesday, 12th December, 2023 at
3.00 pm**

PRESENT:

COUNTY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES
County Councillor Louise Brown (In the Chair)
Martyn Groucutt (Chair)
County Councillor Paul Pavia
County Councillor Jill Bond
County Councillor Angela Sandles

FAITH AND BELIEF REPRESENTATIVES
Sue Cave
Suzanne Gooding
Maddie Saraireh

TEACHER REPRESENTATIVES
Suzanne Hamer

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

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

APOLOGIES:

Revd. Jonathan Greaves, Ali Szwagrzak, Rebecca Morteo and Charlotte Rhodes.

1. Declarations of Interest

None

2. To note the record of the meeting held on 4th October 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved subject to the following amendment:

“The Member expressed concern that church schools should be represented without restriction and should just be based on teachers’ professional associations.”

3. Professional Learning Update

The EAS RVE Adviser presented a professional learning update:

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- Collective Worship Conversations continue to assist with ideas and to review provision in schools. Provision is well structured and planned for and the Conversations provide an opportunity to share ideas across the consortium.
- A recording of a conversation with the son of a holocaust survivor with a Q & A session will be added to a playlist on the consortium teams channel as a resource for schools for Holocaust Memorial Day and Curriculum for Wales. It was confirmed that some holocaust resources can be suitable for Year 6 and some can be adapted. CC Pavia provided the name of a person whose father was part of the legal team at the Nuremburg Trials who may be able to contribute to resources.
- A suite of professional learning webinars to improve practice, knowledge and understanding of the six principal religions and a non-religious philosophical conviction is being developed to upskill non-specialists in RVE across all phases.
- More resources are being developed to share with schools to reiterate the remit of RVE and what it means to schools (including the legalities).
- A professional learning event to share ideas, pedagogy and inspiration was held on 28th-29th November 2023. Five Monmouthshire schools (of 37) attended the event (none from secondary). All resources have been uploaded to the Teams space to access later.
- A new issue of the Challenging Religions magazine has been issued for AS and A Level students and contains many useful articles on different topics, and is a good resource.
- The lack of RVE graduates entering initial teacher training has been highlighted at NAPFRE meetings. It was noted that there is a £10,000 incentive for teacher training in England so it's difficult to compete. There is concern that there will be a lack of specialists in future in Wales. Questions have been asked of Welsh Government about the potential for bursaries with a negative response.
- It was queried if SAC Members could have access to the resources available.
- It was queried how a range of non-religious philosophical convictions is covered in the playlist of resources. It was explained that Humanism UK had offered to present in webinars. If other NRPC representative bodies are available to contribute to broaden the resources available to schools, this would be welcomed. It was mentioned that a primary school had presented to Council on Climate Change. If good practice is seen in schools, it was requested that contact with the RVE Adviser is made to share with other schools and SAC.
- The Legal Adviser offered to send a link to Councillor Bond to explain the view of the senior courts in determining the scope of beliefs.

4. WASACRE Update

WASACRE Conference:

It was explained that there will be a face to face conference run by WASACRE on the 13th June 2024 at Wrexham University and the keynote speaker will be Jeremy Miles, Minister for Education and Welsh Language. In addition there will be a series of online seminars pre and post the conference. The events are free to all SACs and practitioners. Bookings are open now. Those interested can book a place online.

5. Holocaust Memorial Day - (Reminder for schools)

It was highlighted that resources for schools are available on the Holocaust Memorial Trust website. Lessons to Auschwitz is open if schools are interested in signing up for the trip to Auschwitz where two pupils can be nominated and visit Poland in a day.

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Schools are asked to get in touch if SAC or the RE Adviser can assist.

6. Make up of Appointments/recruitment Panel

The item was withdrawn from the agenda today. It was agreed to seek a date in January 2024 to consider this item.

7. Update from Estyn

The Head of Achievement and Extended Services provided an update that when Estyn inspectors visit schools, they look at the whole range of the schools work in terms of the five indicators, focussing on strengths and areas for improvement. Whilst inspectors might see collective worship/RVE they may not focus on that, and they might not mention anything in writing. The inspectors will concentrate on quality and learners' progress.

This situation makes it difficult for SAC to evaluate the quality of RVE provision in schools consistently. The current Action Short of Strike also limits opportunities to monitor provision. In response to a question, it was explained that the RVE Adviser maintains good interaction with schools via professional learning. The RVE Adviser suggested that it may be possible to report an overview of the work of clusters if a cluster of schools is willing to engage by e.g. Teams.

Estyn periodically issues thematic reports and any recent and relevant reports will be brought to SAC's attention.

8. Any Other Business

- Membership: It was confirmed that there has been no response from the Independent Group regarding the vacancy for County Council representative. Regarding political balance, this is not strictly required but it would be good practice to represent political balance. Regarding Teacher representatives, it was confirmed that five nominations have been received for seven places. Professional associations will be asked if the remaining two places can be filled. If not, the Headteachers will be asked for nominations.

9. Date of Future Meetings

13th March 2024 at 3.00pm

The meeting ended at 4.00 pm

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