

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Standing Advisory Council on Religious, Values and Ethics (SAC) held at County Hall, Usk - Remote Attendance on Tuesday, 15th February, 2022 at 1.00 pm

PRESENT: COUNTY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES:

County Councillor P. Pavia (Chair)
County Councillor T. Thomas
County Councillor M. Powell
County Councillor L. Brown

FAITH REPRESENTATIVES:

Revd. J. Greaves
Mr. N. Pryor
Ms. R. Morteo
Mrs B. Quinlan
Mrs S. Gooding

TEACHER REPRESENTATIVES:

Mrs S. Hamer
Ms. C. Skinner

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Sharon Randall-Smith	Head of Achievement and Attainment
Matt Phillips	Chief Officer People and Governance and Monitoring Officer
John Pearson	Local Democracy Manager
Wendy Barnard	Democratic Services Officer
Hayley Jones	Curriculum Partner (SACs and RVE)

APOLOGIES:

Mrs. S. Cave, Mr. A. Szwagrzak and Mr. N. Jenkins

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed Rebecca Morteo, new Faith representative representing Church in Wales and Charlotte Skinner, new Teacher representative.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Public Open Forum

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No members of the public were present.

4. SACRE Terms of Reference for Agreed Syllabus Conference (see link)

The Head of Service: Achievement & Extended Services introduced the report to consider the SACRE Terms of Reference for an Agreed Syllabus Conference. The new curriculum will require the alignment of a new agreed syllabus for delivery in Monmouthshire schools from 1st September 2022.

An Agreed Syllabus Conference must be arranged following a procedure set by Welsh Government to collectively agree a syllabus that is then ratified by Council. The membership of the Agreed Syllabus Conference is also clearly set out in guidance. The timeline for the process was provided.

Considering the Amended Terms of Reference (Options 1 and 2) it was suggested that the following amendment should be made:

- Such Christian and other religious denominations as, in the opinion of the authority, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area, together with a place for a group who hold ~~non-religious beliefs~~ "non-religious philosophical convictions". It is recognised that there will be occasions when the interests of efficiency override the requirement for directly proportionate representation (13 members)

The Monitoring Officer agreed with the adjustment in wording for consistency with the Education Act 1996 as amended and suggested that no further definition of non-religious philosophical convictions is made.

It was commented that the SACRE is currently lacking in representation from other principal religious traditions. It was agreed that the change from SACRE to SACs will provide an opportunity to seek representation from other principal religious traditions on the SAC. In the interim, once the terms of reference are approved, letters can be sent to add individuals to the Agreed Syllabus Conference. It was noted that there is also the option to co-opt advisers.

The report also includes proposals for teacher representation and Option 1 would continue to allow professional associations to make nominations but when it is not possible to secure representation and vacancies are outstanding, approaches to headteachers will be permitted. It was commented that s31 of the Education Act 1996 mentions teacher associations and approaching headteachers would be a move away from this. The Monitoring Officer suggested it was reasonable and proportionate to move away to achieve the overarching aim of the legislation. It was confirmed that it has been difficult to secure representation via the teacher associations and it would be possible to take nominations from headteachers to the associations for their approval.

A Member asked about representation of non-religious philosophical convictions referring to the wide range of these and whether approaches should be made for representation, and queried what changes to the RVE guidance the Church in Wales and Catholic Church are proposing. The Member commented that the Legislative Summary refers to a range of religious beliefs and links it to European case law. The new legislation still specifies Christianity and principal religions as represented in Wales (changed from UK) whilst the range applies to non-religious philosophical convictions. It is important to identify the representation that will aid us to shape the syllabus.

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It was confirmed that the Church in Wales has a group of practitioners working on the RVE guidance and that will shortly be available online. A presentation can be provided at a future meeting. It closely aligns to the Welsh Government guidance.

The RVE Adviser added that all the advice that has been provided and other authorities are following is to be as inclusive as possible.

Considering non-religious philosophical convictions, the Monitoring Officer suggested trying to achieve a balance providing the example that Humanism as a non-religious philosophical conviction counteracts religious beliefs whereas the specificity of single issue convictions (e.g. veganism, climate change) can include religious belief. An explanation of how representation has been identified will provide transparency.

Option 1 was approved.

5. Agreed Syllabus Conference - Timeline

An explanation of the steps and timeline for an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) was provided.

A query was raised about the numbers that can be involved in an ASC and it was confirmed that there was no restriction.

6. Schools Update

The RVE Adviser provided an update as follows:

- School have been advised that GCSE RE/RS has been added to the list of subjects that will have advance information (general topic areas, certain questions) in addition to the extra 25% reduction in the assessed content. Queries can be addressed to the RVE Adviser.
- WASACRE is developing professional learning for RVE based on the RVE guidance. A team of ten practitioners will be given 9 full days to create the resources before the end of the summer term. Online modules and related resources will be included.

7. WASACRE Business

It was noted that the term of office of Mrs. S. Gooding on the WASACRE Executive Committee is coming to an end. C.C. L. Brown expressed an interest in the vacancy and read out her personal statement.

The three groups voted in breakout rooms and ratified the nomination of C.C. L. Brown.

Mrs Gooding congratulated C.C. Brown on her nomination and said that she had enjoyed her term on the WASACRE Executive Committee.

The Chair , on behalf of SACRE, thanked Mrs Gooding for undertaking the role for the last three years.

8. Any Other Business

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WASACRE Terms of Reference had been circulated and it was agreed that an addition should be made to enable hybrid meetings. The Clerk will pass on this suggestion.

9. To confirm the minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as an accurate record.

10. To confirm future meeting dates

9th March 2022 – 1) Legacy Agreed Syllabus Conference
2) Agreed Syllabus Conference

28th March 2022 – SC Workshops

26th April 2022 - SACRE

The meeting ended at 2.15 pm