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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)
held
at County Hall, Usk - Remote Attendance on Wednesday, 20th October, 2021 at 10.00 am

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
Mr. A. Szwagrzak
Mrs S. Cave
Mrs B. Quinlan
Mrs S. Gooding

TEACHER REPRESENTATIVES:

Mrs S. Hamer
Nr N. Jenkins

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Sharon Randall-Smith	Head of Achievement and Attainment
Wendy Barnard	Democratic Services Officer
Georgie Bevan	Principal Professional Learning Lead (STEM and Wider Curriculum)
Hayley Jones	Curriculum Partner (SACs and RVE)

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs. K. Wilding.

1. Appointment of Vice Chair

Mr. A Szwagrzak was appointed as Vice Chair.

2. Public Open Forum

No members of the public were present.

3. Membership Report

County Council representatives	1 Conservative vacancy 1 Liberal Democrat vacancy
Faith representatives	1 Church in Wales vacancy

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	1 Buddhist faith vacancy
	1 Hindu faith vacancy
	1 Jewish faith vacancy
	1 Muslim faith vacancy
	1 Sikh faith vacancy
Teacher representatives	4 teacher vacancies
Co-Opted vacancies	2 vacancies
Total	14 vacancies

Concerns were expressed at the number of vacancies on the SACRE, and the underrepresentation of different faith groups.

- i. The Chair agreed to follow up the County Council vacancies.
- ii. The temporary Church in Wales Diocesan Director is retiring. Mrs. Quinlan agreed to follow up the resulting vacancy.
- iii. The Chair will work with Hayley Jones to make direct approaches to faith leaders locally and outside Monmouthshire to attempt to fill the vacancies.
- iv. A request has been received from Wales Humanists applying for membership of Committee A. The request was deferred, and the Chair will send a holding response whilst efforts are made to fill vacancies and pending advice on process to add to Committee A. Initial findings suggest that this would be a Council decision.
- v. SACRE should raise its profile and work in schools. The EAS is working on this.
- vi. Under the terms of reference teacher representatives are appointed by professional associations. It was questioned if this was the most effective way to appoint teacher representatives and if the terms of reference could be reviewed so that nominations can be made via Headteachers with possibly one designated place to represent professional associations.
- vii. Mrs Cave offered to contact the Interfaith Council regarding the faith vacancies.

4. To confirm the Annual Report 2020/21

The draft report was confirmed as presented subject to the following amendments:

- i. Revd Greaves to represent the Baptist Church not the Free Church Council.
- ii. An amendment was required to make clear that the letter from the Minister, received in May 2018, provided guidance to local authorities on discretion concerning representatives from organisations representing non-religious beliefs such as Humanists to sit on Committee A.

5. Curriculum Updates

Hayley Jones RVE Adviser provided an update on the assessment adaptations published by the WJEC. It was noted that the GCSE adaptations are the same as last year. For GCE A Level, there has been some streamlining in terms of teaching time/content due to the pressures arising from Covid 19 alongside retaining a balance so that assessment will enable access to further education.

Qualifications Wales has announced some plans to prepare should Covid levels increase. The Minister for Education has also written a statement that pupils will have their qualifications awarded through a Centre Determined Grade (CDG). It was commented that there is need for caution as many children are in and out of school and that exams will be difficult this year. The changes were welcomed.

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6. Curriculum Wales Updates

There is a national roll-out of modules for different phases of curriculum design to support senior leaders. The sessions were recorded and available to view for those who were unable to attend. The focus now is on the roll out of the Curriculum for Wales development programme for middle leadership that provides the opportunity to specialise in Areas of Learning Experience.

Attendance has been very low due to the pressured circumstances and problems releasing staff to attend. There has been a flexible approach to when and how sessions are provided to ensure access for as many staff as possible. It was acknowledged that there is reliance on the goodwill of staff who are overwhelmed.

An additional secondary design group has been set up to address that the focus has mainly been on primary sector; regional and national networks are the next step.

The EAS has set up task and finish groups on various aspects but the availability of school staff to attend remains a difficulty.

A Member asked whether the introduction could be postponed due to the pressures. It was confirmed that the introduction of the Curriculum for Wales has been put back a year for secondary schools but not for primary schools. It was questioned why there a distinction between secondary and primary. It was possibly due to the pressures related to CDGs. The Chair will raise this point at a meeting of Cabinet Leads with the WLGA. It was confirmed that trials of the curriculum are running this year with Y7 engaging in a joint AOLE Humanities project at King Henry VIII Comprehensive School. It was agreed that a letter would be written by SACRE to the Minister (copying in EAS and SACRE Members) to apply pressure to extend the postponement to the primary phase.

A Member asked how the draft RVE statutory guidance is progressing recalling that SACRE recommended that the legal elements should be statutory but the more subjective teaching elements should be non-statutory guidance. The current RE framework is non-statutory guidance.

There has to be a SACRE agreed syllabus. WASACRE recently discussed if this could be less prescriptive to allow headteachers more discretion. There were concerns about SACREs not being properly consulted.

It was explained that SACREs have termly updates containing e.g. RVE and any changes to collective worship. The new RVE guidance will have a significant impact on agreed syllabus. SACRE can adopt the guidance as its agreed syllabus, amend it or do own something different. No action can be taken until the final guidance is published. The next update is expected in December 2021. It was agreed to consider an additional meeting if this is the case.

7. Agreed Syllabus Conference

It was agreed to revisit this item at the March meeting when more information may be available.

8. WASACRE Business

- i. The notes and minutes from the WASACRE meeting held on 16/06/2021 were received.
- ii. The Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement were received.
- iii. WASACRE Meeting 23 November 2021: Our representatives were agreed as County Councillor L. Brown, Mrs S. Gooding and Mrs B. Quinlan

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9. Holocaust Memorial Day

Sharon Randall – Smith agreed to follow up arrangements to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day.

10. Any Other Business

Members were informed that Monmouth Comprehensive School Sixth Form RE Conference is on 18th November 2021 with various workshops. Mrs S. Cave and Revd J. Greaves will be contributing to the event.

11. To confirm the minutes of the following meetings:

The minutes of the meeting held on the 19th May 2021 were confirmed as a true record.

The minutes of the 23rd June 2021 were confirmed subject to the following typographical amendment to item 2: Must be clear on legal requirements particularly that religious traditions are mainly Christian and the other ~~principle~~ principal religions. Using the phrase “Range of religions” is incorrect as it only covers Christianity and ~~principle~~ principal religions in Wales.

12. To note the date of the next meeting as 9th March 2022

The meeting ended at 11.12 am