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**MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the meeting of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)/  
Standing Advisory Council (SAC) held  
at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK on Wednesday, 8th March, 2023 at  
10.00 am**

**PRESENT:**

**COUNTY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES**

County Councillor Martyn Groucutt (Chair)  
County Councillor Paul Pavia  
County Councillor Louise Brown

**FAITH REPRESENTATIVES**

Sue Cave  
Suzanne Gooding  
Maddie Sareirah  
Ali Szwagrzak  
Chris Francis (Observing)

**TEACHER REPRESENTATIVES**

None

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

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

**APOLOGIES:**

County Councillor Angela Sandles, Nick Pryor, Jonathan Greaves, Rebecca Morteo, Charlotte Rhodes, Suzanne Hamer and Neil Jenkins

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There was NO QUORUM due to there being no Teacher Representatives present therefore no decisions could be made. The notes of the meeting are not binding.

The Chair welcomed Maddie Saraireh, new Muslim representative to the meeting and Chris Francis, representing Humanism. Chris will be an observer until SAC is constituted.

**2. To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26th October 2022 and matters arising**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 2022 were confirmed as an accurate record but will also be presented to the next meeting for approval due to there being no quorum.

Matters Arising:

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Membership Update: In response to a query, it was explained that that NRPC membership has been considered by Full Council however the way the decision was passed wasn't lawful as an NRPC representative can only be appointed to SAC not SACRE. SAC has not yet been properly constituted. The next item to consider SAC Constitution and Terms of Reference seeks to rectify this position so the NRPC representative can be added. SAC will come into existence following changes to the constitution at the Council AGM in May. The opinion was expressed that to say it was not legal because SAC is not yet constituted is incorrect because SACRE continues until it is agreed to be SAC so the Council decision should stand. The Chair explained that the advice regarding the amendment to the Constitution at the County Council's AGM in May will be that there should be one body going forward combining SAC and SACRE to continue to fulfil its legacy duties around the teaching of religious education until it transitions wholly to RVE at the end of the academic year 2025/26. Members of SAC not previously members of SACRE would not be able to vote on matters relating to the teaching of religious education.

Inspection reports: Regarding provision of inspection reports, it was explained that Estyn has changed the way that it inspects and reports. Estyn no longer automatically reports on religious education and many Section 50 inspections have been suspended resulting in information normally gathered from inspection reports not being available as before. It is a matter for discussion how the relevant information is now captured so that SACRE/SAC can reassure itself that the curriculum is being adequately delivered in schools. Discussions with WASACRE about how best to share the information continue. Estyn inspectors will observe collective worship and may or may not report on it. Schools carry out self-evaluation and have been happy to provide us with the information. S50 schools can more easily provide due to external verification. Work with schools will continue to find a reasonable and workable way to retrieve this information. In the meantime, the RVE Adviser will collate information from recent Estyn reports for SACRE/SAC.

### **3. SAC Constitution and Terms of Reference**

The Legal Adviser introduced the report on the SAC Constitution and Terms of Reference proposing that the Monitoring Officer implements the proposed amendments to the MCC Constitution at the County Council AGM in May 2023 to formalise the establishment of SAC. Following presentation of the report, Members were invited to ask questions and to comment:

- A Member suggested that the report is reviewed in light of recent advice from the Welsh Government proposing that SACRE and SAC co-exist as the functions of SACRE need to continue until the summer of 2026. The constitution and term of reference should distinguish each body's functions with reference to the agreed syllabus for RE for SACRE and the agreed syllabus for RVE for SAC. Responsibilities for collective worship remain for SACRE and SAC plus the right of withdrawal from RE.
- Referring to the March 2022 report to Council, a Member suggested the NRPC representative only observes on SACRE and commented that no particular NRPC group had been determined by SAC and questioned if expressions of interest should be sought to ensure a full representation to move to a new SAC. The Chair noted that historically there has been no formal process to appoint members and suggested that a transparent and objective recruitment method is established. Regarding NRPC representation, expressions of interest were sought and Humanism was the only response received. Additionally, Humanism is part of the RVE syllabus.
- Referring to the report, the Legal Adviser indicated that the advice stands and disagreed that the wording "legacy matters" is insufficient as it will be possible to advise on legacy

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matters as specified in statute as and when necessary. It was queried if there is a local Humanist group

- Responding to queries about SAC and SACRE, the Chair clarified that there will be one body. SACRE will sit within SAC to review RE until 2026. It was suggested that concerns are forwarded to the Monitoring Officer.
- A Member asked if clarification of the Welsh Government guidance could be sought. The Legal Adviser was asked to speak to the Monitoring Officer and if he thought necessary to seek clarification. If advice is taken from Welsh Government, it was requested that this is forwarded to the Councillor Pavia and Brown. It was requested that if the Monitoring Officer decides to contact Welsh Government for clarification, he should provide the advice obtained by Councillor Brown from Welsh Government and WASACRE.

#### **4. Membership Report**

The Membership report was received as per the list in the agenda.

Referring to making appointments to SAC, Members made the following points:

- The LA has responsibility to check that the appointee is representative of the organisation in question.
- A working group consisting of the Chair, Legal Adviser, RVE Adviser and Sharon Randall-Smith will work on a transparent and objective appointment method to seek representation from local groups for SAC like the process to appoint Local Authority School Governors. The group will report back to a future meeting.
- The Councillors will meet to address council vacancies.
- It was queried if, when forming the new body (SAC) if there would be a need to review all positions.

#### **5. EAS RVE Partner Update**

- The RVE Adviser will provide a summary of collective worship and assemblies for schools providing information on similarities and differences. This matter is also to be discussed by NAPFRE and WASACRE.
- The Welsh Government resources are not yet published.
- WASACRE will conduct a soft review of agreed syllabi across Wales to check they are in line with the ethos and spirit of the new curriculum.
- The Jewish History Association of South Wales is running training on its resources on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023. Details to be circulated.

#### **6. WASACRE Business**

- a) WASACRE: The minutes of Autumn meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2022 were noted.
- b) WASACRE Executive Committee Nominations: CC L. Brown is a member of the Executive Committee until 2025.
- c) WASACRE Letter: Welsh Government to undertake a short desk-based exercise, which involves looking at the text of the agreed syllabi for each local authority to get a sense of how faithful these are to the vision and ethos of RVE in the Curriculum for Wales. A letter was also circulated to thank everyone for the work on the Agreed Syllabus.
- d) WASACRE Spring Meeting. The meeting will be hosted virtually by Pembrokeshire SACRE and will take place on Tuesday 21st March. Four representatives may attend.

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**7. Any Other Business**

There was no additional business.

**8. Date of next and future meetings: 14th June 2023 at 3pm (Please note new time)**

The Legal Adviser explained that the next meeting will be SAC.

**The meeting ended at 11.01 am**