

Attendance

<p>Ynys Môn / Anglesey</p> <p>Blaenau Gwent</p> <p>Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr / Bridgend Edward Evans (EE) Alice Parry (AP) Donna Graves (DG)</p> <p>Caerffili/ Caerphilly Councillor Anne Broughton-Pettit</p> <p>Caerdydd / Cardiff Donna Graves (DG)</p> <p>Sir Gaerfyrddin / Carmarthenshire Jennifer Harding-Richards (JHR)</p> <p>Ceredigion Rhianydd James (RJ) Keith Evans (KE)</p> <p>Conwy Roger Boon (RB) Phil Lord (PL)</p>	<p>Sir Ddinbych / Denbighshire Jennie Downes (JD) Phil Lord (PL)</p> <p>Sir y Fflint / Flintshire Vicky Barlow (VB)</p> <p>Gwynedd</p> <p>Merthyr Tudful / Merthyr Tydfil Donna Graves (DG)</p> <p>Sir Fynwy / Monmouthshire Louise Brown (LB) Rachel Buckler (RBU) Wendy Barnard</p> <p>Castell-nedd Port Talbot / Neath and Port Talbot Rachel Samuel (RS)</p> <p>Casnewydd / Newport Ali Mahammad (AM)</p> <p>Sir Benfro / Pembrokeshire</p> <p>Powys</p>	<p>Rhondda Cynon Taf Mathew Maidment (MM)</p> <p>Abertawe / Swansea</p> <p>Torfaen Emily Lloyd (EL)</p> <p>Bro Morgannwg / Vale of Glamorgan Donna Graves (DG) Tyler Saunders (TSA)</p> <p>Wrecsam / Wrexham Tania ap Siôn (TS) Libby Jones (LJ)</p> <p>NAPfRE Paula Webber (PW)</p> <p>EFTRE Phil Lord (PL)</p> <p>Central South Consortium Donna Graves</p> <p>EAS</p>	<p>Observers:</p> <p>REMW</p> <p>WJEC Chris Owens (CO)</p> <p>ESTYN</p> <p>Welsh Government Elin Stock (ES)</p> <p>REC Libby Jones (LJ)</p> <p>Church in Wales Elizabeth Thomas (ET)</p> <p>Catholic Education Service</p> <p>Qualification Wales</p> <p>Interfaith Network</p> <p>ADEW University Of Wales</p> <p>USW Trinity St David</p> <p>Minutes (from recording) Jo Nicholls (JNI)</p> <p>Translator: Sioned Jones</p>
---	---	---	--

Minutes of the meeting

1. Introduction and welcome

EE welcomed members to the Autumn meeting and Introduced Will McLean (WM), Chief Officer, Children and Young People, Monmouthshire County Council.

Will McLean gave a warm welcome to Monmouthshire and thanked SACRE and WASACRE for arranging the meeting. WM remarked that it was a great honour and delight to be able to host the meeting. WASACRE a hugely important body for Monmouthshire as a local authority. The work that WASACRE does across Wales is hugely valued by all colleagues in Welsh Education.

Unfortunately, due to a significant fire event in Abergavenny, the LA is still working through the emergency response and WM couldn't stay for the meeting. He wished the Committee a productive meeting of discussions and reflections on how this vital area can move forward in the future.

EE thanked WM.

2. Quiet reflection

EE led a quiet reflection for those who have been affected by the fire in Abergavenny and the emergency services who risk their lives. As the meeting date is close to armistice day and Remembrance Day, EE asked to think about those affected by war throughout the world, those who have given their lives, who still give their lives, who still suffer because of war.

3. Apologies

Apologies given by Rheinallt Thomas, Cardiff and Kathy Riddick, WASACRE Executive, Apologies from Monmouthshire Council - Martyn Groucutt, Sharon Randall Smith and Sue Cave. Vicky Barlow, Flintshire may join later in the meeting.

4. Minutes of the last meeting, Zoom, 5th March 2024 (Carmarthenshire)

EE ran through the minutes for accuracy. Corrections as follows:

- JHR confirmed the following attendees from Carmarthenshire SACRE - Jennifer Harding Richards, Gareth Morgan DOE, Alison Harding, Delyth Jones, Michael Thomas and Paul Davis.
- Keith Evans is a Ceredigion representative and not Carmarthenshire
- Page 2 – Jennifer Harding Richards name to be corrected.

With the above corrections made. RG proposed and KE seconded that the minutes are an accurate record of what was said in the last meeting. EE will sign the minutes and send to AP for filing.

5. Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting.

No matters to address from the last meeting.

6. WASACRE conference

Feedback / Impact

EE mentioned how successful the conference had been and that the speakers were excellent. EE asked LJ and TaS to report back.

LJ provided the following report:

- The National WASACRE conference 2024 was devoted to celebrating religion, values and ethics in the curriculum for Wales, and it was held at Wrexham University on the 13th June 2024. It was a huge success, with positive feedback on the day and in the weeks that followed, from teachers, SACRE members, workshop providers and other invited guests. The day provided significant professional learning opportunities for SACRE members and RVE practitioners across Wales. There were inspirational keynote speeches by the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Lynne Neagle, Professor Graham Donaldson and the Bishop of Llandaff, the Right Reverend Mary Stallard. Delegates appreciated the ample opportunities to raise and discuss issues that really matter for RVE and to make meaningful connections with like-minded colleagues. WASACRE is grateful to its partner, the National Advisory Panel for RVE in Wales, NAPfRE, for its support. Overall, it was a fantastic day, well resourced, well received and well attended.

Next steps

- Following the day event, the recordings of the keynotes have been published on the WASACRE website, along with the RVE film trailer that was shown during the event and other recordings, including conference voices, which was immediate feedback that was received. All have been emailed out to SACRE clerks for sharing more widely with SACs and SACREs and their schools. The conference package included a series of pre-conference and post conference online seminars. The post conference seminars ran until the end of September. Again, the feedback from these was extremely positive. The recordings for these are also available on the [WASACRE website](#). The conference as a whole, including all its various parts, has highlighted the need and appetite for further professional learning opportunities and for professional dialogue. In response the WASACRE Executive is currently considering a suitable date for a follow up conference sometime next year.
- John Mitson, WASACRE Treasurer will feedback on the costings of the conference when he is available.

EE offered the floor for comments:

RD: From the Vice President's perspective, I thought it was an excellent day, an excellent opportunity for practitioners and those interested in RVE to contribute and to gain more experience. I'd also like to take the opportunity to thank LJ, and TaS for their hard work.

JD: Comment from Teams chat: It was an excellent day and excellent pre and post conference comments as well.

PW: It was a fantastic conference, probably one of the most professional conferences that I've ever attended. NAPfRE members as well as the WASACRE Exec worked very hard, in particular LJ and TaS need to be thanked for the very hard work and to JD for advertising. I was left feeling incredibly excited about RVE and the keynotes were brilliant, recognizing the importance of RVE in Wales. It was fabulous to hear from Professor Donaldson as he was at the beginning of the journey when including RVE in the curriculum. I would recommend, if you didn't attend the conference to listen to his keynote.

It is important for us to have these conferences, perhaps more regularly in the future, being delivered by people with a deep understanding of the vision for our RVE in the humanities, in the Curriculum for Wales.

TS: Really good day, well organised. As a teacher it was inspiring to meet other professionals. It was great to deliver one of the workshops with AP.

DG: Comment from Teams chat: Agreed with PW's and TS's feedback.

RB: Thanked everyone who organised it. It was great to hear from Professor Donaldson. I particularly enjoyed hearing in detail from practitioners on the ground and how they were implementing the curriculum. I personally did not sense any true commitment from the Welsh Secretary.

RJ: Comment from Teams chat: The PL sessions prior and after the conference were welcomed and any further opportunities to have online sessions to support practitioners would be too.

EE: As chair, I would like to reiterate our grateful thanks to those who were involved in the organization of the conference. Obviously, LJ and TaS to a greater extent, because they are based in the North, but to RS who also played a large part in the organization of the conference. These three worked incredibly hard and we are very grateful to the three of them for the success of the conference which hopefully raised the profile of RVE.

7. WASACRE RVE Film

RS provided the following introduction:

- WASACRE has produced a professional film talking about the importance and value of RVE within the Curriculum of Wales and RS as an optional subject at GCSE and A levels. Aim of the video is to show how RVE can contribute to developing ambitious, adventurous principled learners who will be valuable members of society.
- The association has produced the film for schools to be used in many ways, it is suitable to be shared with pupils, teachers, governors and anyone else who is interested in the understanding of RVE.
- WASACRE thanked Awen and Ysgol Maesgarmon in Flintshire for their contributions, and Fresh Gecko Productions for their vision and production of the film. In addition, LJ, TaS and RS have spent considerable time planning and reviewing the film.

- The film was shared with the Committee.
- The film will be live soon and available on the WASACRE website and distributed widely to WASACRE contacts including NAPfRE colleagues.
- A discussion about the film ensued both in the chat and verbally. On the whole the comments were extremely positive, but some comments questioned the balance of the film and whether there was enough 'religion' included in it, e.g.:
 - The film is good but there is no mention of individual religions and seems secular from its stance;
 - Feel like we are weakening RVE;
 - It is lacking in balance, and we have a responsibility to all religious faiths and secular organisations;
 - the biggest hook is the fundamental question, does life has meaning? If you ask that question, there are religious responses and non-religious responses to that. That did not come out at all during the film; and
 - I don't think symbols in the background is good enough. It needed to be articulated strongly as part of the central message.

TaS responded to these comments by explaining that Officers involved in the planning and production of the film had to consider very carefully how to approach it and it was decided to approach it through big questions. Religions have a huge part to play in responding to these questions. It wasn't given subject content, but it showed a range of areas that are exciting to young people which can be explored through religious traditions and through philosophical convictions. A group of Officers, including teachers were involved in the content of this film.

The positive comments included:

- the content is grounded in the statements of what matters for the humanities;
- using big hook transferable questions that learners would be interested in;
- capturing a conceptual approach to learning;
- excellent in terms of cynefin, especially the bilingual aspect and the fact it was filmed in the Welsh countryside and a Welsh school;
- totally embraces the new Curriculum for Wales especially the 4 purposes;
- will aid discussion going forward and will aid teachers in the classrooms;
- professionally produced, and it was good to see youngsters presenting it;
- The questions in it were excellent such as AI etc. and will give a good taster to pupils;
- Pupils know that they will learn about religion in RVE as that is mainly what they do in primary school;
- it would be a good video to show in the start of year 7 to explain to pupils what kind of things will be discussed from a religious and non-religious perspective in the lessons;
- In five minutes, we're not going to be able to cover all the different religions represented in Wales and all of the different world views;
- the video captured those engaging philosophical questions that my students ask in class.
- it is a good hook to start exploring the different religions with students;
- really engaging, I really liked how she switched between English and Welsh.

EE concluded the discussion saying that whilst the content is debatable, the point is, it has raised the profile of RVE, and if it works as a hook in schools to get pupils interested in RVE, then it is only to be commended. A huge thank you to LJ and TS and to those who were involved in the making of the film, and congratulations to the film company for a very professional production.

8. Welsh Government [WG] matters

ITE recruitment – meetings with Kevin Palmer

RS gave the following update from Welsh Government:

- There has been a series of meetings with Kevin Palmer (KP) and Mark White (MW) from Welsh Government around the issue of ITE students and the numbers doing PGCE, Religious Studies or equivalent. The most important headline meeting was on 7th October 2024. Attending from WASACRE were LJ, AP, RS and PW.

Prior to that meeting, there were six suggestions of different areas that we could look at to help support early career teachers and to increase numbers to PGCE. Conclusions were that there are three clear areas that with the support of Welsh Government, WASACRE and NAPfRE could develop:

- The first is to develop some sort of short courses, e.g. Twilight type sessions to support early career RVE specialists alongside non-specialists who are delivering RVE in primary or secondary settings. After the meeting the WASACRE members who attended the meeting came up with suggested short course ideas for supporting our actual present teaching session:
 - A humanities type course around enquiry-based approach to learning for primary practitioners
 - A similar course for secondary practitioners
 - The value of cross phase collaboration with RVE
 - How to improve your skills and subject knowledge, a course that would support teachers in how they researched and created their information research, rather than sharing information with them.
 - Planning for progression
 - Objective, critical and pluralistic RVE
- The second area was regarding the new GCSE course coming on board in 2025. It was recognized by Welsh Government, WASACRE and NAPFRE members that there are some specific areas that teachers would need very bespoke and specific support:
 - The non-examined assessments, something that is totally new to the teaching profession
 - To develop knowledge and understanding of non-religious philosophical convictions, which is strengthened in the new GCSE requirements
 - The topics that are new to our GCSE practitioners, such as some of the philosophical theodicies that are within the new GCSE and the freedom of religious expression, which teachers have historically found challenging to teach
- The third and major area that was discussed was curriculum design, and understanding how different schools, primary and secondary, English medium and Welsh medium across Wales are designing their curriculums. The idea here was to recruit a small group of RVE specialists to create a discussion panel to know what is happening at present, to see where we can support in that area. This is being led by Welsh Government.
- The next meeting with KP was intended to take place on the 21st November 2024 to carry on developing these ideas and also focus on how we can increase ITE intake. Unfortunately, due to ill health this meeting has had to be postponed Welsh Government are doing considerable research on ITE intake at present, so it is a watching brief until Welsh Government come back to us with and how we can support in increasing our teacher cohort.

VB: Thanked the group for this forward thinking, helpful and useful list.

Usual termly meetings with Welsh Government (WG) colleagues

LJ reported the following:

There have been two meetings with Welsh Government since the last main meeting.

- The first meeting was on Monday 20th May 2024. The items discussed included professional learning resources, RE Hubs website, WASACRE membership, qualifications for mandatory subjects, an update on ITE conversation with KP, the WASACRE conference and a brief update on Adnodd, which is the group that oversees the provision of educational resources and commissions resources to support the teaching and learning of Curriculum for Wales.
- The second meeting was held on Monday 1st July 2024, which was a requested meeting from WASACRE to Welsh Government. Lloyd Hopkin (LH) attended from WG, along with other WG colleagues. This meeting was regarding the report from the National Centre for RE in Wales, at Bangor University, on the RVE provision in schools following its presentation at the all-party Parliamentary Group on Faith and Belief, chaired by Darren Miller in May 2024. WASACRE and NAPFRE colleagues raised their concerns about the report with WG, including questions around the academic rigor of the report and the quality of the research, the clear lack of understanding of the curriculum for Wales and RVE within that report and the very small sample of respondents, which was 43 practitioners across Wales. WG colleagues agreed that due to the sample size of the research, it was too small to draw any useful conclusions or make broader judgments. It was agreed in the meeting that the issues highlighted in the report are historical and relate to RE, rather than RVE, and that it was unhelpful. WG did say that they were going to pass it on to their academic research team to review. WG said they were concerned about the divide being created because of different attitudes to the philosophical approach of the curriculum for Wales and WG colleagues stated that a content heavy approach to curriculum design is not consistent with the vision or spirit of

the Curriculum for Wales. WASACRE officers have requested a follow up meeting with WG colleagues but are still waiting for confirmation of a date.

LB: Because RVE is a new curriculum subject it is important to welcome research, important for us to monitor and know how RVE is going and what practitioners think about it.

PW: Research is welcomed but there is a need to ensure the academic rigor of research.

Professional learning for RVE

LJ reported the following:

- As part of the professional learning project that WASACRE worked with Welsh Government, the governor playlist has been given the green light but is still awaiting publication due to reasons out of WASACRE control. We are hoping that this will be published soon. We are still in talks with relevant WG colleagues about the publication of other playlists, including the literacy, numeracy and digital competence playlists. There seems to be a different challenge regarding these playlists and the goal posts seem to be constantly changing, but we do remain hopeful that they will be published in the near future.
- We are also currently in talks about whether a link to the WASACRE website can be included within the professional learning resources section of Hwb.

LB: There are 1.4 million people, in the recent census, who say they are Christian. It is the predominant religion in Wales. In my experience of the professional learning seminars, I have always expressed the concern that the emphasis is on other religions other than Christianity.

LJ: Recordings of the conference seminars are separate to these PL playlists.

PL: With two of the SACREs that I support, Governors is an area for development. We have been waiting for the Governor playlist for a long time as we don't want to replicate work that is already covered within the playlist. It will be helpful in providing consistent messages across Wales. I rate the five current playlists highly and have been promoting them in our schools and are worth critically engaging with.

LJ apologized for such a delay, but it has been with the Hwb team for a year. As soon as it comes out, LJ will send the link to all SACRE clerks.

9. WASACRE Research project

TaS reported the following:

- A research initiative is being undertaken by WASACRE and is currently in development. WASACRE recognises the value of quality, peer reviewed research in religion, values and ethics and can see the proper relationship between research and curriculum development that has been there from the start of the curriculum for Wales in its very conception, so that relationship is essential.
- Resulting from conversations within the WASACRE Exec over the past few months, it has been decided that this is the right time for a research project focusing on RVE in the Curriculum for Wales and looking at how it is embedding in our schools and settings nationally.
- We want to draw on the research expertise of the St Giles Centre in Wrexham in order to develop a research survey for this purpose. There will be no cost to WASACRE. A WASACRE group has been sent up from the Exec which includes TaS and LJ, who are both from the St Giles Centre in Wrexham, RS, WASACRE Vice Chair and Neath and Port Talbot Advisor, Paula Webber, Chair of NAPfRE, who works in ITE at Cardiff, Met University and AP, WASACRE secretary, and a Cardiff secondary school teacher.
- This group has created a draft survey, which is currently being reviewed by a number of practitioners. The purpose of the survey is to capture a snapshot of practitioners' experience of and engagement with curriculum change, with a focus on RVE. This will be done through an online survey, largely qualitative, of practitioners across Wales, and it is going to reflect a variety of education settings. We are focused on specifically listening to the teachers and the practitioners themselves. We hope to be sending out more information and survey links soon, both to SACS and to all advisors in Wales. We hope that you will help us try and obtain as many responses as possible through directly contacting your schools and settings and encouraging them.
- The purpose of this survey is to make a practical difference. It is a crucial time in curriculum roll out, we want to hear in a non-directive way, the experiences of practitioners in Wales so that we can have a better understanding of how best to support them. We hope that the findings will be helpful on local levels findings which will include plain language reports and peer reviewed published articles to be shared widely.

EE: It is very important that we are fully aware of what the situation is in Wales and have that widely known across the four nations of the UK, and into European forums as well.

VB: Great idea. Really positive. Looks exciting, it will be useful, what is the schedule?

TaS: At the latest the beginning of spring term.

PL: Very welcome, is this a response to the National Centre of RE in Wales report? Concerned about promotion, as there will there be two surveys. Are we to encourage both?

TaS: This survey is not a response to the Bangor research. The aims of this research and the content is very different. There are no conflicts.

KE: Very supportive of the proposal.

JHR: Which universities are involved in the ethical approval and will it be shared with SACREs.

TaS: Ethical approval has strict published guidelines. St Giles Centre is leading this project, Bishop Grosseteste University and Cardiff Met University will be involved. The ethical guidelines can be shared.

PW: Cardiff Met use the [Bera Guidelines](#) for the ethic approval.

RB: Have you considered extending your research to obtaining a pupil view of the new national curriculum in RVE? Starting to think about and engage with in Conwy with the support of the Head of Education.

TaS: It is exciting what you are doing in Conwy. The reason why we chose practitioners is because it is an incredibly challenging time, and we need to identify how best to support practitioners who are essential for making Curriculum for Wales work.

10. Qualifications

Draft Religious Studies GCSE specification

Chris Owens, Subject Officer, WJEC for GCSE gave the following report:

- There is a draft new GCSE specification on the WJEC website. Responses received from Heads of RE and Advisers etc. have been considered. WJEC are still waiting for approval from Qualification Wales (QW). The process is that WJEC received the agreed criteria from QW and WJEC have constructed a specification based around the requirements, which has now been submitted to QW. There have been a series of subsequent meetings about the actual content. The specification and the sample assessment materials (SAMs), including example examination papers, should be approved before the end of December. The original intention was that SAMs, and the spec would go out in December and then to reassure colleagues that there will be a detailed teacher guidance produced as part of the new specification. WJEC will address issues in two free walk-through PL events, which are now postponed until later in December when the specification will be released. In the spring term, February – March there will be 12 National PL training events for all RS teachers in Wales. It is important that colleagues know they will have to be enrolled by their head teachers in the location where those events are going to take place. Those 12 events will include some detailed guidance about the NEA. In the new specification there will be two written examination papers, and there will be two pieces of NEA, coursework, which must be completed by the students. The specification comes into action in September 2025 with the first year of assessment in 2026 and then the second full year of assessment in 2027.

PW: Is the training available for ITE lecturers and for ITE students?

CO: The attendance of the PL event will not be available to PGCE tutors. There will be accommodation for advisors who are not teachers. There is a limit on numbers. The ITE students on placement in schools would be invited.

DG: Can the deadline for submissions for questions for the seminar be extended due to the delay in the seminar in December?

CO: If anybody would like to email me any questions, I will do my best to make sure they're included on the Q&A.

RJ: Will the detailed teacher guidance be released at the same time as the specimen assessment materials or will these be later? There is also a lot of concern amongst our secondary practitioners if the Welsh material will be released at the same time as the English material?

CO: As a subject officer, I am committed to the bilingual production of materials. For example, there will be new blended learning materials put on the WJEC website, in the medium of Welsh and English, and for the first time, they will be editable, so centres will be able to edit those resources for their own centres. WJEC should have bilingual materials for the specification, for the SAMs and for the Guidance for Teaching.

JHR: Given the delay regarding the specification approval and the delay to the professional learning Is there any likelihood of the delay for RS being beyond September of next year?

CO: It is important to note that the PL advance timetable for the spring is on track. The two walk through events are only delayed by two weeks. WJEC is committed for RS to be ready for the wave one launch in September 2025 because RS needs to be launched at the same time as History and Geography.

JHR: Heads of department are really concerned about the short time frame. The walk through now being delayed by two weeks, has an impact on teachers, their well-being and their workload.

CO: I think when people look at the specification there is a great deal of content in there which is similar to what colleagues will be doing on what will become the legacy specification. On the blended learning site there are materials which could still be used with the new qualification, I'm conducting a mapping exercise of the two. WJEC will do everything we can to support the classroom teacher and ensure there is a rolling program of NEA support as well.

RB: I can understand the need to get this up quickly to create parity with the other humanities subjects. We had a long discussion with our SACRE about this last week. The starting point was the decrease in the uptake for GCSE previous to this. The two things that came forward most were that there is an enormous breadth to be dealt with in the curriculum and also that if we start the basis of the new national curriculum, which is religion, values and ethics, the philosophy behind that is not religious studies, in fact. And so there was a concern that because you're going down that route, it doesn't knit appropriately with what takes place in the curriculum at the other key stages, and therefore that would affect the way people delivered at Key Stage Three. There was enormous concern and debate at our SACRE with regard to it.

CO: I think we've had to make this point several times already that the GCSE RS is an academic qualification. It is not, it is not a natural follow on from the RVE. The RVE would be taught in mandatory RE lessons, if you like, in years 10 and 11. What we're offering is an academic GCSE Religious Studies. The subjects inevitably are content heavy if we submit a qualification to QW that has insufficient content in it, it will be rejected. We understand that in some ways, there is a disconnect between what goes on in Key Stage Three within the new curriculum and with the new GCSE. In terms of the new specification for GCSE, it will be a good foundation for AS and A level. I will report back with your feedback.

LB: For GCSEs and AS and A levels it is important to have more content because pupils will be applying for universities, therefore expect the academic level to be the same in England and in Wales. You mentioned about editing resources for your own centres, does this apply both to the written papers and the assessed work as well?

CO: We're having discussion. The new blended learning materials will be editable by a centre so they can adapt the materials as to how they want to use them. When we have approval on what we can do with the NEAs, we will have to appoint, for example, new principal examiner, new principal moderator for those courses. From January onwards looking closely as to how to support colleagues. PL events running from February to March, there will be a substantial amount of focus on the NEA.

PW: RVE, when it was written in the curriculum was meant to be a subject in the same way as history, geography, social studies etc. I am very concerned that Exam Boards or QW suggest that it is not an academic subject, it is going to undermine RVE in the Curriculum for Wales, and it is going to prevent the progression from 3 to 16, for which it was written. There should never be a disconnect with those subjects. RVE is academic and should have the same standing as any other subjects in the curriculum.

PL: In the Conway SACRE a teacher was looking at the EDUCAS specification and compared it to the WJEC specification. It does seem that the EDUCAS specification is more religion, values and ethics than the religious studies specification within WJEC and it is a little bit lighter on content. Does the specification reflect more QW's direction for RS or for WJEC's view of religious values and ethics?

CO: WJEC must follow the criteria which QW have created. I think inevitably, because of the new curriculum in Wales, certainly at GCSE, there will be a parting of the ways in terms of GCSE within Wales, and the GCSE within EDUCAS. I apologize to PW if I gave the impression that RVE is not academic. As an ex-head of RE, RE is very academic. What I'm saying is, is there is a division between RVE, lower down the school, and then what would be the mandatory RE, and then the GCSE RS course that we've submitted to QW. QW were very clear that what we were submitting was a GCSE Religious Studies. I'm very mindful of the comments that people have made. WJEC will work hard to make the resources as helpful as possibly to teachers.

EE thanked CO.

ACTION: If any Advisor would like the link to the booking form for the face-to-face events by WJEC, please email libby.jones@wrexham.gov.uk .

Qualifications Wales (QW) consultation on the 14-16 wider offer

LJ gave the following report:

- QW released a consultation on the qualifications in the 14 to 16 wider offer, the deadline for responses was 23rd October 2024. It was based on the draft criteria for those qualifications. Due to the tight deadline, WASACRE officers had to quickly draft a response. There was no time to share it with the Executive or SACREs. However, all SACRE clerks received a notice of this consultation to share with their members and schools. In the WASACRE officers' response, one of the main issues raised was regarding the name of one of the units in the skills suite – 'Faiths and World Views in the Community'. WASACRE officers felt that this was problematic because it did not reflect the language of the Curriculum for Wales, or the language within the Curriculum and Assessment Wales Act 2021. A suggestion was given that it could be changed to 'Religion and Beliefs in the Community'. This title was felt that it was more likely to enable learners to explore the concepts of religion and belief, in addition to engaging with and developing respect for the religions and beliefs, including non-religious philosophical convictions of people and groups in their community in line with the current act.
- The skills suite is made up of a number of different units, and they will be available for first teaching in September 2027. The units will cover entry level one, two and three, and then level one and level two qualification accreditation. They can be accessed by all types of learners.
- There are four titles within the skills suite that would be relevant to mandatory RVE.
 - The one that is currently called Faith and World of Views in the Community
 - Values for Life
 - Ethical Choices
 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

There are other units that potentially could have opportunity for RVE teaching [here is the link have a look at the skills suite on those units.](#)

There is also a personal project that is attached to this suite that learners can choose an RVE related personal project. That is another opportunity for mandatory RVE.

MM: Two questions 1) In terms of the Agored Cymru qualification, Exploring World Views, will there be much crossover with the new qualification so we can use resource that we have for Agored Cymru? 2) How many of these units are schools likely to conduct or have the options for? If only have a choice of four options, are they realistically going to choose just the RVE related options?

LJ: To answer the second question, it is envisaged that schools will probably provide this skills suite within their current provision for the Welsh Baccalaureate. Obviously, all these units are optional, so schools can opt for which ones they want to provide, and that might be based on their expertise within schools, some schools may look to give learner choice. Therefore, it isn't a guarantee that the units related to RVE will be offered in all schools and that all learners between the ages of 14 to 16 will be provided with those units. Obviously for those schools who either don't provide those units or learners don't opt for those units, even if they are provided, the question is, how does the school then provide mandatory RVE in addition to what they already have on their timetable? Question 1 will be answered in the next agenda item.

RS: The challenge is that there are a wide range of unit options, how a school is going to pick and choose is an unknown. So even if they did all the mandatory units for all learners, it may not necessarily mean it covers mandatory RVE, as is described within the 14 to 16 guidance within the Curriculum for Wales and the Humanities AoLE. There are still a lot of questions.

Agored Cymru and NCFE

LJ reported:

- The last registration for the Exploring World Views of Agored Cymru qualification is the 31st October 2027 and certificates will be awarded up to 2029. We are aware that some schools will be opting to go down this route in order to fill that gap until the skills suite comes out. The amount of crossover between Agored Cymru and the RVE related units in the skills suite is unknown. However, Agored Cymru are bidding to write the skills suite units. If they are successful in that, I would imagine there would be some crossover in content, but it would

look different because the unit size for the skills suite is a lot smaller than the current units of the Exploring World Views Agored Cymru qualification.

- The other qualification to mention at school, is the Equality and Diversity qualification from NCFE. The last registration for that qualification is the 30th September 2026 and certificates will be awarded up to 2028.

MM: There will be a legacy qualification for the Agored Cymru as the new qualifications start in 2027 and we can still enter Agored Cymru in 2027 so there will be a year crossover.

11. Estyn: New Inspection framework – ‘What we inspect’ and ‘How we inspect’

EE mentioned that ESTYN have produced two documents which were sent with the agenda papers:

- 1) Inspecting for the future, 2024 2030 how we inspect, maintain schools and people referral units
- 2) What we inspect 2024 to 2030, maintain schools and people referring units.

12. Report by the Executive Committee held on 2 October 2024 (Rachel Samuel)

RS reported that the Exec met on 2nd October 2024 and focused on the matters discussed in today is meeting.

13. Up-dates:

REMW (Paul Morgan)

- See item 14.

WJEC (Christopher Owens)

- CO to share information with LJ for onward distribution.

REC (Kathy Riddick)

- LJ: REC is currently discussing the curriculum review that is happening in England. TaS, PW and LJ supporting REC in this discussion.

EFTRE (Phil Lord)

- The previous chair from EFTRE Lesley Prior passed away in April and there is a tribute on the EFTRE website. EFTRE is new chair, Burt Robin, a professor of Religious Education at the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Bonn. He is passionate about teaching and researching learning processes in the field of Religious and world views in a European context.
- [Resources from the conference in Rome are available on the EFTRE website.](#)
- The 2025 conference is to be held on 21-24 August in Budapest and is titled The Art of empowerment in RE - community complexity, compassion and commitment. PL proposed that WASACRE sponsors a teacher to attend the conference as per last year.
- Second proposal - would WASACRE endorse a project for EFTRE to support looking at Cynefin around Europe and would funding be available.
- EE: Agree to the first proposal in principle but both proposals need to be discussed with the Executive and the WASACRE Treasurer.

NAPfRE (Paula Webber)

- Last met in Wrexham we held a hybrid meeting, appreciated being in the room and to see the impressive progress that is being made with professional learning throughout Wales, and how hard all our advisors and member organizations are working in rolling out professional learning for RVE. I'm currently compiling a list of the PL that is available throughout Wales.
- PW asked whether it would be possible to list the official advisers to local SACREs on the WASACRE website, so the teachers know the appropriate person to go to for support. NAPfRE previously had a page on the old website perhaps this can be reinstated.
- Would like an update on the upload of the updated annual reports and agreed syllabi to the WASACRE website.

Local matters / enquiries

LJ reported:

- We are supporting local SACREs with their local matters as and when they come in.

We received a question about whether WASACRE would consider producing some guidance on prayer and reflection spaces in schools. The WASACRE Exec discussed this and are currently considering different guidance that already exists to see whether this is something they could point schools to or whether a new document needs to be produced.

- A letter has been received by a number of different local authorities in hard copy format, and it is basically a complaint about the teaching of evolutionism in schools. These letters have not been addressed to WASACRE, but it is a matter for some local authorities, which is why it is included here. Not all local authorities have received it. It is down to individual local authorities and their SACREs how they might respond to it, but WASACRE can support and advise, but it wouldn't be an official WASACRE response.
- One of our SACREs has received a complaint about church evangelism in schools and the advisor for that SACRE, along with other advisors across Wales, formulated a response. If any of the SACREs have a similar complaint, then we can share that response.
- RB: Interested to receive any thoughts you have on reflection. 50% of our responsibility, in fact, for SACREs is for collective worship, and as part of our strategic plan, we've started to engage with this. PL has spoken with secondary heads very recently, and a dialog is open about producing a consensual policy, how collective worship will be defined within the authority and then carried out within the schools. It has been well received.

14. Correspondence

EE read out the notice received from the REMW.

- In summary: The notice was regarding the dissolution of the REMW, as a result of an extraordinary meeting which was held on the 29th July 2024, chaired by the President of REMW. The meeting was convened following several consultation discussions. The discussion on this issue began over 10 years ago, there were a number of factors, including major changes in the world of education and the disappearance of county advisors and with the overwhelming majority of LEAs having stopped contributing to funding REMW. The trustees realized that REMW had declined so much that there was no option but to wind it up. This was a very sad step for them.
- The Trustees proposed that the REMW funds to be transferred to the Council for Sunday schools and Christian Education in Wales. The Trustees were inviting the council to support its two proposals, one which was to dissolve the REMW, and secondly, to transfer its assets, including money in hand, to the Council for Sunday schools. The vote to accept both proposals was unanimous. In then Chair's concluding remarks, it was noted that they could be proud of what REMW has achieved over the decades. The Chair thanked everyone for their support, and particularly Rheinallt Thomas (RT) for his many roles over a difficult period in the history of the movement. Appreciation was also recorded for the contribution made by Paul Morgan (PM) who represented REMW on WASACRE, NAPfRE and RE Council over the last decades.

EE: WASACRE have always been very appreciative of their support through RT and through PM and we have acknowledged the notice and expressed our sadness and our sympathies to them and given our grateful thanks. RT has sent links to a bilingual a book on the history of REMW, and [a link to the REMW published material](#).

ACTION: Contact LJ if you would like to receive these links.

PW: On behalf of NAPfRE I would like to thank all of those involved with the REMW, particularly RT and PM. It is a sad day because REMW were the founders of NAPfRE. I don't think WASACRE would exist either without the influence of REMW. The decades of consistency and work that they have influenced in in Wales is incredible. I and NAPfRE are very grateful for the work that they've done over the years,

AP: Other correspondence:

- Luke Donellan from Humanist UK has shared [this link to a new animation in Welsh](#) and other education resources.
- Fiona Moss, Education and Programs Manager for Callum St Gabriels raised the problem that despite there being a bursary of £10,000 for training an RE teacher in England, there is no equivalent for training to be an RVE teacher in Wales. FM wanted WASACRE to know this current situation and mentioned it would be useful to have a follow up conversation.

LJ: We are grateful that Fiona informed us. Although we agree to pursue the bursary idea, we are in regular discussion with WG, looking at finding other manageable and focused solutions to address the complex issues surrounding ITE recruitment in Wales.

15. Any other business (to be agreed in advance of the meeting with the Chair)

None reported

EE thanked the members for their time at this productive meeting.

16. Date for next meeting – Thursday 6 March 2025 Bridgend - online.

Meeting ended at 1.30pm.

DRAFT