

# Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

## Minutes of the meeting held on 19 February, 2019

- PRESENT:** Councillor Dylan Rees (Chair)
- The Education Authority**
- Councillors Gwilym O Jones, Alun W Mummery, Alun Roberts
- The Religious Denominations**
- Mrs Anest Frazer (The Church in Wales)  
Mrs Catherine Jones (The Baptist Union of Wales)
- Teacher Representatives**
- Mrs Heledd Hearn (Ysgol Uwchradd Bodedern)  
Mrs Mefys Jones-Edwards (Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones, Amlwch)
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs Helen Bebb (Ysgol Uwchradd Porthaethwy) (RE Co-ordinator)  
Mrs Gwyneth M Hughes (Senior Standards and Inclusions Manager, Education)  
(Clerk to the SACRE)  
Mrs Shirley Cooke (Committee Officer)
- APOLOGIES:** Councillor Glyn Haynes  
Mr Christopher Thomas (The Roman Catholic Church)  
Mr Rheinallt Thomas (Co-opted Member – Sunday Schools' Council)
- ALSO PRESENT:** Ms Lynn Ball (Head of Function [Council Business]/Monitoring Officer) (for  
Items 11 & 12)  
Mrs Gwennan Roberts (Headteacher – Ysgol Gymuned Rhosybol) (for Item 3)
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The Chair referred to the sad loss of Professor Euros Wyn Jones, a member of the Anglesey SACRE, who recently passed away suddenly. He acknowledged Professor Jones' excellent work and contribution to the SACRE over many years, as well as his contribution to the community and the whole of Wales. He stated that Professor Jones' passing would be a great loss to all the SACRE members.

### **1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Councillor Gwilym O Jones declared a personal interest in respect of Item 6 – Schools Self-Evaluation, as he is a School Governor at Ysgol Y Fali.

### **2 MINUTES - 9 OCTOBER, 2018**

The minutes of the previous meeting of the SACRE held on 9 October, 2018 were presented and confirmed as correct.

#### **Matters Arising:-**

- Following SACRE's request to WASACRE to include Collective Worship on its next agenda, the Chair referred to item 9 of WASACRE's minutes from its last meeting held 20 November, 2018, which states that a document has been prepared by a member of the WASACRE on Collective Worship, which will be circulated to every Local Authority in Wales. The Chair reported that once

SACRE has received a copy of the document, the Committee can then decide whether its concerns have been addressed.

- The Chair also referred to item 7 of the WASACRE minutes, which state that WASACRE has written to Mr Arwyn Thomas, GwE's Chief Executive, expressing concern that GwE has withdrawn its specialist RE support to SACREs.
- The Clerk to the SACRE confirmed that she has contacted the Presbyterian Church in Wales requesting that the Church nominates a member as a representative of SACRE, and is awaiting a response.
- The Clerk reported that the Head of Learning has agreed that Ms Meinir Hughes, a former GwE Challenge Adviser will be assisting Mrs Helen Bebb and Mrs Heledd Hearn to prepare SACRE's Annual Report for 2018/19.
- It was noted that the Chair and Clerk are in discussion with regard to planning arrangements for attending a meeting of the Heads of Anglesey Secondary Schools.
- It was highlighted that more needs to be done to raise awareness of SACRE's role and responsibility in the primary sector.

#### **Action:**

#### **To invite the Chair to attend a Primary Schools Forum to experience good practice in Anglesey's schools, as well as raise SACRE's profile within the sector.**

- The Clerk confirmed that she has written to Ysgol Rhosybol, Ysgol Bryngwran and Ysgol Gynradd Llanfairpwll congratulating them on their success in achieving excellent results in Estyn's inspection reports.
- In response to a disparity in a Welsh RE A Level examination paper, Mrs Heledd Hearn confirmed that every secondary school in Anglesey has emailed the WJEC to view their concerns.

It was noted that teachers received a generic response from WJEC acknowledging the error, stating that the oversight would be taken into consideration when marking. The Chair referred to Andrew Pearce's comment in item 10 of the WASACRE minutes, which noted that:-

*"The situation was dealt with very effectively, and that pupils were not disadvantaged and did not suffer any lesser grades as a result of the situation".*

Contrary to Mr Pearce's comment, SACRE's teacher representatives felt that pupils had been disadvantaged by the error.

### **3 PRESENTATION - YSGOL GYMUNED RHOSYBOL**

The Chair welcomed Mrs Gwennan Roberts, the Head Teacher of Ysgol Gymuned Rhosybol to the meeting, and invited her to give a presentation on the school's work in relation to Religious Education provision.

The Head Teacher reported that over the last two years, the school has been preparing an overview on how to move forward within the new RE curriculum and its 4 principles, devised by Professor Graham Donaldson.

The Head Teacher gave an interesting presentation, which provided an insight into the work and activities undertaken at the school. It was noted that the children enjoy participating in school activities eg. 'Open the Book', morning assemblies, seasonal activities, community projects, visiting places of interest etc. Good examples of how the pupils relate to each other and work well together were presented before SACRE. They include school projects, where the children share resources, show empathy in wanting to help others, and learn about other religious beliefs and traditions.

The Head Teacher highlighted the importance of giving pupils a voice, and an opportunity to be independent and responsible for their actions.

The Chair thanked the Head Teacher for an interesting presentation and for sharing the school's good practices with SACRE.

**RESOLVED to note the presentation and excellent work undertaken at Ysgol Gymuned Rhosybol.**

#### **4 ANGLESEY SACRE'S DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18**

The SACRE's draft Annual Report for 2017/18 was presented before the Committee for consideration.

The Chair reported that the Chairman's Summary would be presented at a later date, once the draft report has been finalised.

It was noted that pupils studying RE in KS4 and KS5 performed well, with three quarters attaining A-C grades in their results, and all KS5 pupils attaining a pass.

It was highlighted that RE is a popular subject, as a third of pupils who study the GCSE course progress to take A Levels in the subject. It was noted that the results are positive, considering the challenges faced by the curriculum and lack of bilingual resources that are available for teachers, and in comparison to the low uptake in the Humanities field.

A question was raised by SACRE as to whether there were inaccuracies in the table contained in Section 2.3.3 of the report on Estyn's inspection of primary schools? SACRE agreed to raise the issue with the officer preparing the Annual Report.

**RESOLVED:-**

- **To note the content of the draft Annual Report for 2017/18, as presented.**
- **The Clerk to raise SACRE's concerns regarding the table in Section 2.3.3 of the report, with the officer preparing the Annual Report for 2017/18.**
- **That an updated version of SACRE's Constitution, together with any amendments proposed by SACRE be forwarded to the relevant officer by the end of February, so that a final draft Report can be prepared for circulation to SACRE members.**

**Action: As noted above.**

#### **5 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STANDARDS**

The Clerk to the SACRE's report incorporating information from Estyn Inspection reports undertaken at Ysgol Talwrn and Sir Thomas Jones School, Amlwch, was presented for SACRE's consideration.

It was noted that Estyn reported that the standards of RE provision and Collective Worship are good in both schools.

Mrs Mefys Jones-Edwards reported that she was the school representative for the recent Estyn Inspection at Sir Thomas Jones School, Amlwch, and was pleased to be involved in discussions with the GwE Challenge Advisers. She stated that when Estyn speak of standards in RE, they are referring to reading, writing and cognitive skills, and highlighted the following extracts from the report:-

- *Many pupils are confident readers. They distil relevant information from various sources successfully and analyse texts effectively, and come to sensible conclusions ...*
- *Many pupils respond skilfully to the content and style of literary texts ...*
- *Many pupils write extensively for a wide range of purposes and audiences ...*

Mrs Jones-Edwards reported that she was pleased that RE was receiving due attention, on a par with every other subject within the curriculum.

**RESOLVED to note the information presented in the self-evaluation reports.**

**Action: None**

## 6 SCHOOLS' SELF-EVALUATION

The schools' self-evaluation reports of Ysgol Gymuned Rhosybol, Ysgol Llanfairpwll, Ysgol Parc y Bont, Llanddaniel and Ysgol Y Fali were presented for SACRE's consideration.

The SACRE discussed the general lack of response from schools when asked to present a self-evaluation report. A question was raised whether SACRE should put pressure on schools who have not submitted self-evaluation reports, to do so every two years? It was noted that previously, the trend was for SACRE to ask schools who had recently been inspected by Estyn for their reports.

It was suggested, due to changes in the curriculum, that GwE, the local authority and Church work together on the best model for schools to present self-evaluation reports.

The Chair suggested, and **it was agreed to prioritise schools who have not previously submitted self-evaluation reports.** It was noted that, as it is mandatory for schools to prepare the reports, it is only a matter for schools to submit reports to SACRE.

### RESOLVED:-

- **To note the content of the schools' self-evaluation reports.**
- **That the Chair seeks the Head of Learning's support to move forward with the above proposal.**
- **That the Clerk and Mrs Anest Frazer discuss the best options on moving forward regarding schools' self-evaluation reports.**

**Action: As noted above**

## 7 THE COMMITTEE'S CONSTITUTION

The SACRE's Constitution was reviewed by the Committee.

It was noted that there are two vacant seats on SACRE from religious denominations, namely the Union of Welsh Independents and the Presbyterian Church of Wales.

A question was raised, due to non-attendance, whether Rev Kate McClelland is SACRE's representative from the Methodist Church?

It was noted that SACRE has one vacant seat for a teacher representative from the primary sector on SACRE.

The Clerk reported that she would contact Mrs Amanda Earnshaw, the teacher responsible for RE in Ysgol Cybi, Holyhead, to enquire whether she would be interested in becoming a primary school representative on SACRE.

### RESOLVED:-

- **To update SACRE's Constitution.**
- **That the Clerk writes to the Secretary of the Union of Welsh Independents requesting that it nominates a representative from the Church to become a member of the Anglesey SACRE.**
- **The Clerk to contact the Secretary of the Methodist Church to enquire whether the information currently held by SACRE on its membership is up to date.**
- **The Clerk to invite Mrs Amanda Earnshaw to represent the primary sector on SACRE.**

**Action: As noted above**

## 8 WALES ASSOCIATION OF SACRES (WASACRE)

The draft minutes of the previous meeting of the WASACRE held on 20 November, 2018, were presented for consideration.

The RE Co-ordinator, referred to item 10 on the agenda – Andrew Pierce’s response to WJEC and A Level feedback from 2018 results.

The RE Co-ordinator stated that she disagreed with Mr Pierce’s statement, because although the A level grades are very good, the grade boundaries for Philosophy are very low in A Level and GCSE. It was noted that to achieve a C grade, the current boundaries are 60%. Last year the boundary went down to 47% for a C grade, which can be misleading, as standards are decreasing.

Concerns were raised that schools still do not have bilingual resources for the A Level RE syllabus. It was noted that several units of the A Level course do not have resources in English or Welsh. The teachers felt that it is disappointing that this matter has not given priority by Welsh Government.

**RESOLVED that the Clerk e-mails the Council Leader to pass on SACRE’s concerns to Mr Mark Drakeford, the First Minister for Wales, to raise awareness of the lack of Welsh resources in schools.**

**Action: As noted above**

## **9 CORRESPONDENCE**

The Chair reported that he has e-mailed all Head Teachers of Anglesey’s primary schools, in his capacity as Chair of the County Council and Chair of SACRE, inviting schools to celebrate St David’s Day with the children, by carrying out small acts of kindness to remember St David. He requested that the pupils report back to the SACRE on their activities.

## **10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting of the SACRE would be held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 25 June, 2019.

## **11 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was **RESOLVED:-**

**Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, to exclude the press and public from the meeting during discussion on the following item on the grounds that it will involve the disclosure of exempt legal advice within the meaning of Schedule 12A (Category 16) of the said Act.**

## **12 HUMANIST MEMBERSHIP OF YNYS MÔN SACRE**

SACRE considered a request to permit a member of the local Humanist Group to join the Ynys Môn SACRE.

The Chair confirmed that he has now received a response from Mr Richard Speight, Chair of the Bangor Humanist Group, following his request for information regarding membership of the Group. It was noted that the Humanists have 9 local members, 3 of whom live in Anglesey.

The SACRE discussed the Humanists’ request, and sought advice from the Monitoring Officer on the options available.

Having regard to the Monitoring Officer’s advice, **the SACRE RESOLVED as follows:-**

- **Not to support the appointment on the grounds that:-**
  - **While acknowledging potential eligibility, the applicant has failed to provide any information which suggests that their membership is required in order to enable SACRE to appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions of the Isle of Anglesey in discharging its statutory functions;**

- This conclusion is based on the fact that, according to the information supplied by the applicant, there are only three adherents who reside on the isle of Anglesey; and,
  - The applicants are only able to represent their own beliefs and not, as suggested in the application, those of all the population of the Isle of Anglesey who identify as being of no religion.
- That the Chair emails Mr Richard Speight of Bangor Humanists Group, (with a copy to the SACRE Clerk) to inform him of SACRE's decision.

**Action: As noted above.**

The meeting concluded at 3.30 pm

**COUNCILLOR DYLAN REES  
CHAIR**