

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

Minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2022

PRESENT: Councillor Non Dafydd (Chair – from Item 2)

The Education Authority

Councillors Gwilym O Jones, Alun Mummery,
Dylan Rees (Chair for Item 1), Arfon Wyn

The Religious Denominations

Mr Christopher Thomas (The Catholic Church)

Teacher Representatives

Mrs Manon Morris Williams (Ysgol Santes Dwynwen,
Newborough)

Co-opted Member

Mr Rheinallt Thomas

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs Gwyneth M Hughes (Senior Welfare Manager, Education)
(RE Advisor to the SACRE)
Mrs Shirley Cooke (Committee Officer)

APOLOGIES: Mrs Elaine Green (The Presbyterian Church of Wales)
Mrs Mefys Jones-Edwards (Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones, Amlwch)
Rev Neil Ridings (The Church in Wales)
Rev Deborah Stammers (The Baptist Union of Wales)

1 CHAIRPERSON

The retiring Chair, Councillor Dylan Rees reported that he is standing down as Chair of the SACRE after 9 years in the role. He stated that it has been a pleasure and honour to represent the SACRE, and thanked everyone for their support over the years, particularly Mrs Gwyneth Hughes, the RE Advisor, for her assistance, guidance and excellent work.

Members of the SACRE expressed their gratitude to Councillor Rees for his dedication in his capacity as Chair.

Councillor Gwilym O Jones proposed that Councillor Non Dafydd be elected Chair of the SACRE for the next 5 years. The SACRE unanimously accepted his proposal, and Councillor Non Dafydd was elected Chair of the SACRE.

2 VICE-CHAIRPERSON

Councillor Arfon Wyn was elected Vice-Chair of the SACRE.

3 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None received.

4 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting of the SACRE held on 15 February 2022 were presented and confirmed as correct.

Matters arising from the minutes:-

Item 2

- The RE Advisor confirmed that although she is in regular contact with GwE regarding arrangements between the secondary and primary sector, no official correspondence has been received.

The RE Advisor reported that Mr Phil Lord, a GwE Advisor, provides support and guidance to SACREs in Flint and Conwy. She stated that GwE is committed to providing specialist expertise within the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE) to schools in setting up their curriculums. It is unclear whether GwE will provide the same professional support to the Ynys Môn SACRE. Concerns were raised that this Committee will not function effectively without the necessary support from GwE.

Mrs Manon Morris Williams reported that Mr Phil Lord has met with schools unofficially in two catchment areas in Anglesey, including the secondary sector, where he gave a specific presentation on mandatory training on Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE).

It was noted that support is provided to schools in the form of resources, which are shared between schools, in line with the new Agreed Syllabus. It was suggested that Mr Phil Lord be invited to attend the SACRE's next meeting to brief this Committee on the views he has expressed, particularly in terms of an unitary approach regarding the provision of advice and expertise.

RESOLVED that the RE Advisor extends an invitation to Mr Phil Lord to attend the SACRE's next meeting to discuss whether GwE can provide support and guidance to the Ynys Môn SACRE.

- It was confirmed that Mr Edward Morris Jones has been appointed as SACRE's representative from the Union of Welsh Independents.
- It was agreed that the RE Advisor invites a member of the Church in Wales to attend the SACRE's next meeting to present an overview of the Church's Pilgrimage Project.

Item 3 – It was confirmed that a copy of the SACRE's Annual Report for 2020/21 has been forwarded to Welsh Government.

5 THE AGREED SYLLABUS FOR RELIGION, VALUES AND ETHICS FOR ANGLESEY SCHOOLS

The RE Advisor presented the new draft Agreed Syllabus for RVE for Anglesey Schools, which was approved in a meeting of the Agreed Syllabus Conference on 15 February 2022. She stated that the syllabus is specific to Anglesey's schools, and will need minor amendments eg a cover, date, and Anglesey Council's stamp on it before it can be finalised. The final version will then be forwarded to Welsh Government, confirming that the County Council has adopted the syllabus as its own.

The SACRE confirmed that the new Agreed Syllabus for RVE for Anglesey is an excellent version of the document, which will be user friendly for the Island's schools.

It was noted that the new name for the Agreed Syllabus in Welsh is "Maes Llafur Cytunedig", not "Maes Llafur Cytûn".

RESOLVED to forward the final version of the Ynys Môn Agreed Syllabus for Religion, Values and Ethics to Welsh Government before 1 September 2022, confirming its adoption by the County Council.

6 NAPFRE'S POLICY ON RELIGION, VALUES AND ETHICS

The RE Advisor reported that she is a member of NAPFRE, and attended one of their meetings recently, which was also attended by Mr Phil Lord. She stated that NAPFRE consists of a small group of specialists in the Religion, Values and Ethics field, and being a member of the group provides an opportunity to share any concerns, and work on specific topics.

The RE Advisor reported that NAPFRE are working on a draft policy to share with schools, which will fit in well within the new Agreed Syllabus. The draft policy should be completed by the beginning of September, and will be circulated to schools for adoption. One important topic related to the policy will be that parents will no longer have the right to exclude their children from RE lessons, which will become statutory. It was noted that the policy will assist and support schools in discussing challenging issues.

It was noted that the County Council has appointed a teacher to look after the needs of children educated at home, which was applauded as a positive move forward.

RESOLVED to note the content of the information presented.

7 WALES ASSOCIATION OF SACRES (WASACRE)

Mr Rheinallt Thomas gave an update from the WASACRE meeting held on 29 June 2022.

The following points were noted:-

- WASACRE meeting held in Flintshire, RVE etc was discussed.
- A presentation was given on partnerships and modules by Dr Tania ap Sion.
- An update was provided on collaboration on playlists by Kevin Parker - the first of 4 modules will be available from September.
- Concerns were expressed that words like “playlist” in the new curriculum are not familiar to everyone, particularly the newly appointed elected Members on the SACRE.
- Reflection from previous minutes in March - issue of facilitating bilingual meetings on Microsoft Teams was raised. It is hoped that face to face meetings will resume in future, to bring the 22 local authorities together.
- The next WASACRE meeting will be held in Carmarthen in the Autumn.
- SACRE Wales have suggested changes to the Hwb website, which will need to be confirmed by the Welsh Government Minister. A Hwb Panel will be set up to review resources for the website – a copy of the resources will be forwarded to WASACRE in due course. The Panel will need to ensure that all material on Hwb fits in with new ideas, otherwise its content could be removed from the website. It was noted that one consultancy in Wales considered that Hwb does not comply with the requirements of the new curriculum, in that the website contains too much detail, and suggests what teachers should do, contrary to the elemental principles of the curriculum, that schools decide their own work plans.
- A presentation was given by Jennifer Harding Richards on behalf of NAPFRE on the Consortium partnership. It was noted that Swansea, Carmarthen and Neath Port Talbot have come together to fund a full time Consultant to support SACRES.

Mr Chris Thomas shared his concerns regarding the rise in SACRES collaborating to pay independent consultant in parts of Wales for their expertise. He reported that there is no level playing field for SACRES to receive the support they desperately need.

Reference was made to the WASACRE’s Annual Meeting held on 16 June 2022, and the following points were raised:-

- Minor adaptations have been made to the WASACRE’s Constitution, which have been accepted by the SACRES.
- The next Annual Meeting will be held in Denbighshire in June next year.
- The Ynys Môn SACRE was asked to approve the WASACRE’s Annual Subscription of £480 in respect of the Committee’s membership, as referred to in the Treasurer’s Report.

RESOLVED to approve the payment of £480 for the SACRE’s Annual Subscription for WASACRE’s membership.

With reference to the WASACRE's Executive, it was noted that Dr Tania ap Sion has been appointed as Chair, and Mr Edward Evans has been appointed as Vice-Chair of the Executive. It was noted that only 12 SACREs throughout Wales voted on the Executive's membership, which was very disappointing.

RESOLVED that the RE Advisor invites Mr Phil Lord to provide an overview of the resources that will available in future on Hwb.

8 TO REVIEW THE SACRE'S MEMBERSHIP

The RE Advisor reported that the Ynys Môn SACRE will need to consider whether the Committee's membership should be extended to include members of non-religious groups eg Humanists, Jehovah Witnesses etc. It was noted that Humanists have previously requested to join the Ynys Môn SACRE, but at the time the request was considered, the numbers of Humanists on Anglesey were too small to be represented on the SACRE. It was noted that the Humanists currently have 750 members throughout Wales.

It was noted that before the SACRE can review its current membership, clarity will need to be sought on current legislation, before a decision can be reached.

RESOLVED that the Chair, Vice-chair and RE Advisor liaise with the Council's Legal Section for clear guidance on legislation regarding members of non-religious groups representing the SACRE.

9 ANY OTHER MATTERS

It was confirmed that the SACRE's next meeting will be held on 12 October 2022.

The meeting concluded at 4.00 pm

**COUNCILLOR NON DAFYDD
CHAIR**