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RHYBUDD O GYFARFOD	NOTICE OF MEETING
CYNGOR YMGYNGHOROL SEFYDLOG AR ADDYSG GREFYDDOL (CYSAG)	STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)
DYDD MERCHER 21 CHWEFROR 2024 AM 11:00 O'R GLOCH	WEDNESDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2024 AT 11:00 AM
CYFARFOD HYBRID – YN YSTAFELL BWYLLGOR 1 AC YN RHITHWIR	HYBRID MEETING – VIRTUAL AND IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1
Swyddog Pwyllgor	Shirley Cooke 01248 752514 Committee Officer

AELODAU/MEMBERS

Cynghorwyr / Councillors:

Non Dafydd, Gwilym O Jones, Dylan Rees, Arfon Wyn
(Sedd Wag/Vacant Seat x 2)

Yr Enwadau Crefyddol / Religious Denominations

Parch/Rev Neil Ridings (Yr Eglwys yng Nghymru/The Church in Wales), Colette Owens (Yr Eglwys Babyddol/The Catholic Church), Parch/Rev Sue Altree (Yr Eglwys Fethodistaidd/The Methodist Church), Parch/Rev Deborah Stammers (Undeb y Bedyddwyr/The Baptist Union of Wales), Edward Morus Jones (Undeb yr Annibynnwyr Cymraeg/ Union of Welsh Independents), Elaine Green (Yr Eglwys Bresbyteriaid/ Presbyterian Church of Wales)

Athrawon/Teachers

Mefys Jones-Edwards (Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones), Heledd Hearn (Ysgol Uwchradd Bodedern), Owain Roberts (Ysgol Cybi), Manon Morris Williams (Ysgol Santes Dwynwen)

Aelod Cyfetholedig/Co-Opted Member

Rheinallt Thomas

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A G E N D A

1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

To receive any declaration of interest from a Member or Officer in respect of any item of business.

2 MINUTES (Pages 1 - 6)

To submit for confirmation, the draft minutes of the previous SACRE meeting held on 16 November 2023.

3 WALES ASSOCIATION OF SACRES (WASACRE) (Pages 7 - 24)

- To submit for information, the draft minutes of the WASACRE meeting held on 25 October 2023.
- To consider nominations to the WASACRE's Executive Committee (correspondence attached).

4 LEARNING WALKS (YSGOL BODFFORDD) (Pages 25 - 26)

- To receive an update from the Chair and SACRE members who visited Ysgol Bodffordd.
- Discussion on local pilgrimages in Anglesey.

5 RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL SETTINGS OF ANGLESEY

Open discussion by the SACRE.

(Members are asked to prepare information on locations as a topic for discussion and development.)

6 MEMBERSHIP AND CONSTITUTION OF THE STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) (Pages 27 - 34)

To submit a report by the Director of Education, Skills and Young People.

7 ANY OTHER MATTERS

Any other matters for discussion – with prior agreement of the Chair.

8 NEXT MEETING

The SACRE's next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 17 July 2024 at 2:00 pm.

**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
(SACRE)**

Minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2023

PRESENT: Councillor Non Dafydd (Chair)
Councillor Arfon Wyn (Vice-chair)

The Education Authority

Councillors Gwilym O Jones, Dylan Rees

The Religious Denominations

Mrs Elaine Green (Presbyterian Church in Wales)
Mr Edward Morus Jones (Union of Welsh Independents)
Mrs Collette Owens (The Catholic Church)
Rev Deborah Stammers (The Baptist Union of Wales)

Teacher Representatives

Mrs Manon Morris-Williams (Ysgol Santes Dwynwen)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Owen T Davies (Primary Senior Manager, Education) (RVE
Advisor to the SACRE)
Mrs Shirley Cooke (Committee Officer)

APOLOGIES: Mrs Mefys Jones-Edwards (Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones,
Amlwch)
Rev Neil Ridings (The Church in Wales)
Mr Rheinallt Thomas (Co-opted Member)
Mr Marc Berw Hughes (Director of Education, Skills
and Young People)
Miss Bethan James (Supporting Improvement Adviser,
GwE)

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Chair reported that Councillor Douglas Fowlie has stood down from the SACRE and thanked him for his work as a member of the Committee. She stated that nominations are currently being sought to fill the vacant seat.

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None received.

2. MINUTES

The draft minutes of the previous SACRE meeting held on 12 July 2023 were presented and confirmed as correct.

Matters arising from the minutes:-

- In response to the SACRE's request to participate in learning walks for schools, the Primary Senior Manager confirmed that he has raised the SACRE's proposal with the Chair of the Head Teachers' Strategic Forum. He reported that the Forum is awaiting a response regarding the SACRE's expectations from learning walks. It was noted that once the SACRE have consulted on the matter, their comments will be forwarded to the Chair of the Strategic Forum, so that schools can be updated on the nature of the SACRE's proposed visits to schools.

A proposal was put forward to discuss learning walks in an informal session following today's formal meeting, which the SACRE accepted.

RESOLVED that the Primary Senior Manager forwards the SACRE's comments to the Chair of the Head Teachers' Strategic Forum.

- With reference to the SACRE's Constitution, it was confirmed that legal advice has been sought and is ongoing. An update report will be presented to the next SACRE meeting on 15 February 2024.
- It was noted that GwE is currently adapting its Humanities questionnaire, which will be circulated to Anglesey schools before Christmas.

RESOLVED that the Supporting Improvement Adviser (GwE) provides an update on the results of the questionnaire at the SACRE's next meeting.

- With reference to the SACRE's concerns regarding terminology in Estyn reports, the Primary Senior Manager reported that in future he would raise any further issues with Estyn.

3. WALES ASSOCIATION OF SACRES (WASACRE) UPDATE

The Primary Senior Manager reported that he had attending the virtual WASACRE meeting held on 25 October 2023. He stated that several items on the agenda related to ongoing developments in the Curriculum for Wales.

It was noted that the draft minutes of the meeting will be presented for information to the next SACRE meeting on 15 February 2024.

The draft minutes of the WASACRE meeting held on 19 June 2023 were submitted for information and noted.

4. YSGOL SANTES DWYNWEN – LITERACY THROUGH RELIGION, VALUES AND ETHICS

Mrs Manon Morris-Williams gave a presentation on the work undertaken in Ysgol Santes Dwynwen on literacy through Religion, Values and Ethics. She described how the 3 skills of literacy - listening/verbal speaking, reading, and writing fit in with collective worship, and how the children participate by following a story through listening, looking at pictures, reading and following words.

The teacher reported that during lockdown, weekly collective worship services were shared directly with the children at home on the 'See-Saw' system, where she would choose a hymn, display the words on the screen and through a series of slides the children would learn to sing a hymn.

When the children returned to school, this arrangement continued in the classroom and was extended to include tasks and activities for pupils following on from collective worship. The tasks included discussion topics to develop pupils' skills, video clips to develop their listening skills, writing a letter, a prayer or research books online to develop their reading skills. The children would also light a candle during the service to reflect and think about someone, a personal prayer for that person, before blowing out the candle.

The teacher reported that the school has been working on Ms Bethan James' work recently on progress steps within RVE as part of the curriculum by asking questions; recording and hearing information; analysing and evaluating evidence, reaching a conclusion; and presenting evidence.

The Chair and members of the SACRE thanked Mrs Morris-Williams for her excellent presentation on the school's work from a religious and Christian perspective.

RESOLVED to note the presentation and excellent work undertaken at Ysgol Santes Dwynwen.

5. LEARNING WALKS (SECONDARY)

This item was discussed in an informal meeting following today's formal meeting.

6. PLAYLISTS – RELIGION VALUES AND ETHICS

The Primary Senior Manager reported that Hwb and Welsh Government have created Playlists, which are interactive slides on the Hwb platform for Religion, Values and Ethics, which are excellent resources for schools. He stated that WASACRE, GwE and other stakeholders have contributed to this field by creating and sharing resources in line with the Playlists.

RESOLVED that the Primary Senior Manager provides an update on the Playlists at the SACRE's next meeting.

7. RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL SETTINGS ON ANGLESEY

The Chair reported that she has sought the views of the Supporting Improvement Adviser (GwE) and the Primary Senior Manager on creating a hub for teachers and pupils to access information on religious and spiritual settings on Anglesey. The Chair also sought the views of the SACRE members on creating a hub.

The Primary Senior Manager suggested that the SACRE looks at different buildings and locations that are linked to religion or spiritual settings, which could be included for discussion in SACRE meetings. He stated that he would be happy to lead on this topic and present information in digital format on the microsite to share with schools.

It was noted that the Pererin Pilgrimage Project by the Church in Wales has appointed a new member of staff who will be creating resources for Anglesey schools, which will be available to the SACRE in due course.

The SACRE welcomed the proposal for children to visit religious settings to raise their awareness of visiting Holy places. The SACRE showed concern at the decline in schools celebrating thanksgiving and felt that the importance of thanksgiving needs to be emphasised in schools.

The primary teacher reported that to facilitate visits to religious settings, careful planning would be necessary, and would need to involve people with local knowledge. She stated that a contact list for religious settings would also be useful, so that schools would know who to contact prior to visits. It was noted that visits to a church or chapel can reach across the spectrum in digital format e.g. history, art etc, which can be shared by local people who have access to information relating to religious settings online.

Discussion focused on how resources could be collated from different areas of the Island to share with schools. The following points were raised:-

- Could the SACRE provide information and contact details for religious settings in each specific area on Anglesey that they represent?
- It was suggested that the Primary Senior Manager contacts the Archives Section in Llangefni to seek clarification as to how they could assist the SACRE by providing information and resources on religious buildings on Anglesey.
- A SACRE Church member offered to conduct visits to her chapel in Holyhead. She stated that she could provide a contact list for members of chapels/churches in the area from other religious denominations.
- It was suggested that the SACRE invites a member from the Pilgrimage Project to attend the next SACRE meeting to provide an overview of her work.

RESOLVED that the Primary Senior Manager: -

- **Collates information received on religious settings from members and other interested parties.**

- Invites a member of the Pererin Project to provide an update on her work in preparing resources for schools.
- Contacts the Archives and Library Service to discuss what resources are available on religious settings for schools.

8. UPDATE BY THE DIRECTOR

This item was discussed by the Primary Senior Manager in Item 2 on the agenda.

9. ANY OTHER ITEMS

The Chair reported that in her daily work, she is contacting schools to ask if they would be willing to participate in an Advent Calendar campaign in reverse. She stated that the idea with the reverse Calendar is that we give rather than receive. She appealed to people to think of others and contribute to the local foodbanks at this is a very difficult time.

10. NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the SACRE's next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 15 February 2024 at 2:00 pm.

The meeting concluded at 3:15 pm

**COUNCILLOR NON DAFYDD
CHAIR**

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**Wales Association of SACREs meeting
Rhondda Cynon Taff virtual meeting
through Zoom
25th October 2023
10.30 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.**

Attendance

<p>Ynys Môn / Anglesey Owen Davies (OD) Arfon Wyn (AW)</p> <p>Blaenau Gwent Chris Abbas (CA) Hayley Jones (HJ) Kathy Riddick (KR)</p> <p>Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr / Bridgend Edward Evans (EE) Alice Parry (AP) Donna Graves (DG)</p> <p>Caerffili/ Caerphilly Hayley Jones (HJ)</p> <p>Caerdydd / Cardiff Donna Graves (DG)</p> <p>Sir Gaerfyrddin / Carmarthenshire</p> <p>Ceredigion</p> <p>Conwy Phil Lord (PL)</p>	<p>Sir Ddinbych / Denbighshire Jennie Downes (JD) Phil Lord (PL)</p> <p>Sir y Fflint / Flintshire Vicky Barlow (VB) Dave Mackie (DM) Catherine McCormick (CM)</p> <p>Gwynedd Paul Rowlinson (PR) Meryl Roberts (MR) Menna Baines (MR)</p> <p>Merthyr Tudful / Merthyr Tydfil Donna Graves (DG)</p> <p>Sir Fynwy / Monmouthshire Louise Brown (LB) Hayley Jones (EAS)</p> <p>Castell-nedd Port Talbot / Neath and Port Talbot Nia Jenkins (NJ) Rachel Samuel (RS)</p> <p>Casnewydd / Newport Hayley Jones (HJ)</p> <p>Sir Benfro / Pembrokeshire</p>	<p>Powys John Mitson (JM) Fiona Thomas (FT) Caroline Davies (CD) Michael Williams (MW)</p> <p>Rhondda Cynon Taf Mathew Maidment (MM) Martin Silezin MS Donna Graves (DG) Dave and Jane</p> <p>Abertawe / Swansea</p> <p>Torfaen Hayley Jones (HJ)</p> <p>Bro Morgannwg / Vale of Glamorgan Donna Graves (DG) Kathy Riddick (KR) Tyler Saunders</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 Hayley Jones</p>	<p>Observers:</p> <p>REMW WJEC Chris Owens (CO) Andrew Pearce (AP)</p> <p>ESTYN</p> <p>Welsh Government</p> <p>REC Kathy Ruddick (KR)</p> <p>Church in Wales</p> <p>Catholic Education Service</p> <p>Qualification Wales Kate Russell (KRU)</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>
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Minutes of the meeting

1. Introduction and welcome

TaS welcomed members to the Autumn meeting and introduced Martyn Silezin the 14-19 Strategy Officer at Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).

Martyn introduced the meeting with the following:

Like you all, RCT has been very busy over the last year supporting schools with the changes that have been brought about by the Curriculum for Wales and the changes in the local, national, and international events. On a practical level, we have created a bank of resources for our RVE practitioners, for both the Curriculum for Wales and other events, such as the Interfaith week and Holocaust Memorial Day. We have established professional learning programmes for leading and teaching humanities and RVE in primary and secondary schools. We have also created several network opportunities.

Recently, we have undertaken several projects, and this has included our Philosophy for Children and RVE project in collaboration with SACRE. We have also introduced a digital humanities project, where we explored how to embed that in the humanities curriculum. We have also run courses on curriculum design for humanities and RVE. We have secondary peer working collaboration projects. and we have just completed a project on objective critical and pluralistic RVE, which was in collaboration with the Church of Wales.

I'm very excited this year that we have commenced a project in conjunction with the Faraday Institute, and the Science and Technology Advisor at Central South Consortium. Schools from the area have met. We are hoping to deepen the understanding of how science fits into the world of RVE and vice versa and develop materials in line with the needs of the Curriculum for Wales. If you contact us after this meeting, we're more than happy to tell you in more detail what's going on at RCT.

We're also very determined this year to set up a Youth Forum. This is something that we consider as essential to support the learner voice and to help us to consider how young voices can be heard in relation to issues affecting their education in religious education, religious studies, religion, values and ethics, spiritual development, and on matters relating to collective worship. Following the isolation of Covid I think that there is no better time for us to begin this.

Sadly, I will be retiring in a week's time. I am leaving you to a world with many uncertainties. You face a very difficult time ahead, where events both national and international will leave you with many challenges. I've been a professional educator for 43 years, and I've worked in some of the most impoverished areas and schools in Great Britain and I have never known a time like this with food banks at schools.

Meetings like this are so important to ensure the best possible education system that offers balanced education for all our learners still exists.

TaS thanked Martyn and wished him a wonderful retirement. The important aspect about our local SACs hosting these meetings is that we hear about the wonderful work that is being carried out. If you want to hear more about those exciting initiatives happening in RCT, please contact Donna Graves, the RCT advisor.

2. Quiet reflection

TaS led a quiet reflection to focus on the meeting ahead. Once again, in this termly meeting, we're gathering from across Wales with a common purpose to work together to help best serve our local young people and schools, and through those our local communities. May we be mindful of the opportunities that are being presented to us today and see the value of our own contributions within them.

3. Apologies

None received and none recorded in the meeting chat.

4. Minutes of the last meeting, Zoom, 19 June 2023

TaS ran through the minutes for accuracy. Any matters arising from the minutes are to be discussed separately on the agenda.

A discussion arose around non-religious philosophical convictions on page 3, fourth paragraph from the bottom. It was agreed that this discussion should take place outside the current meeting.

PL: Page 4 states that the Leah Crimes presentation would be sent to WASACRE members. Has this happened?

LJ: The presentation was requested, but not received. This will be followed up.

ACTION: LJ to remind LC to send the summer meeting's presentation for onward circulation to the members.

Page 5: 'CARDARG' to be changed to 'CYDAG'.

With the CYDAG correction made. It was confirmed that the minutes are an accurate record of what was said in the last meeting. TaS will sign the minutes and send to AP for filing.

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

Any matters arising are covered on the agenda.

The question about philosophical and non-philosophical convictions from the previous minutes can be discussed outside this meeting.

6. Welsh Government matters

LJ reported on this item. Welsh Government (WG) colleagues met with WASACRE officers on 5th July 2023. In attendance from WASACRE – TaS, AP, RS and LJ and from Welsh Government - Lloyd Hopkin, Ceri Davis, and Caitlin Doyle.

The **first agenda item**, the summary of legislation, has been carefully worked through with legal colleagues in WG. This document does a slightly different job than the rest of the guidance. Its purpose is to state the legal position rather than guide teachers and there is a careful balance. It is not policy. There was an update in January 2023, where minor amendments were made, certain things were held on to by legal services, just to be safe.

WASACRE raised the question as to whether corporal punishment should be included as an example of a philosophical conviction. This has been kept in because legal services feel that it illustrates the breadth of a range of convictions for the purpose of RVE.

Lloyd Hopkin mentioned that if WASACRE knows of any adverse effects of corporal punishment being included, then we need to provide that evidence for WG.

The inclusion of Alevism has also been kept in to show that it's not just major religions that schools can explore with their learners. Legal services mentioned this could also be a belief locally for some schools. All examples come from European Convention of Human Rights case law.

WASACRE has asked LH to go back to legal services regarding the definition of religion. LJ has emailed LH for an update on this internal discussion with legal services and is awaiting a response.

The **second item** on the agenda was the informal review of agreed syllabi. WG has agreed to contact all LAs to say thank you. LJ will chase today as to when this thank you will be sent. WASACRE has agreed to present a report on the positives from this review and share with SACREs and SACs.

The **third item** on the agenda was the review of annual reports. Welsh Government has asked WASACRE to support them with this process. WASACRE agreed to do this. LJ has emailed WG colleagues to request an update on this work and is waiting for a response.

The **final item** on the agenda was sharing of data, there was some confusion as to what can be shared to SACS and SACREs and what can be shared by SACS and SACREs in the annual report. WG stated that it depends on the purpose of the data, for example, to support learner progress, to support school improvement, etc. Following the meeting, WASACRE sent an email request for more clarity. LJ received an email from Sarah Angel from WG which LJ summarised for clarification:

The Welsh Government restarted reporting of key stage four outcomes at a school level in 2023, using the approach adopted in 2019. Information on the headline measures, which are all based on point scores, will be publicly available in Welsh Government statistical reports and on the 'my local school' website. The headline measures included the capped 9 measure, literacy measure, numeracy measure, science measure, and the Welsh Baccalaureate skills challenge certificate measure.

The Welsh Government also resumed the provision of all Wales core datasets to all schools and local authorities. These arrangements will be for an interim period, beginning with outcomes data from the academic year 2022 to 2023.

The Welsh Government's expectation is that this information will be used to support schools and local authorities to understand their own contexts and improve their own offer. This should not be used in isolation to judge performance or compare schools. Decisions around sharing these resources, and the appropriateness of doing so will rest with schools and local authorities. Consideration should be given to the security of any potentially disclosing information with the datasets in terms of identifiability of individual learners. The advice to SACs and SACREs is to have that conversation with their LA reps to ensure that the data they share in meetings and in their annual report does not identify individual learners and is not used in a way that compares schools or to judge schools' performance.

LB: Could I ask where corporal punishment comes in because it doesn't seem to be on any list on the legislative guidance.

LJ: Agreed to check this outside the meeting and report back.

ACTION: LJ to share the WG's response with SACRE clerks.

ACTION: LJ to check whether corporal punishment is still on the list in the legislative guidance.

7. National Professional Learning resources

TaS: The National Professional Learning resources are being created and published on Hwb as part of a collaboration between WASACRE and the Welsh Government (WG). WASACRE worked very hard to present a case to WG for creating resources to support practitioners delivering RVE. The resources and the areas covered have been identified as needed and created by the practitioners themselves from across Wales. These are practitioner-led resources and WASACRE subject specialists have been supporting the practitioners during this process.

LJ: The governor playlist is to go live in November the module can be accessed by anybody but is specifically tailored to school governors. Currently, the cross curricular modules are delayed and dependent on the reference group comments. WG has had to recruit new teacher members to the reference group as it was difficult to retain teachers that had the capacity to continue in the group. WASACRE has supported WG with this recruitment. We don't have a date for the publication of the cross curricular modules yet, possibly early 2024.

WG colleagues have discussed the immediate professional learning priorities both internally and with education consortia. WG has stated that it is not currently able to commit to further modules at the moment, particularly while they consider their team's capacity, budget implications, etc. WG is going to continue to monitor engagement with the current modules and look at ways to further promote these particular modules. WG is considering a blog piece, which highlights how schools have been using the modules, along with other new professional learning, such as the UNCRC and DARPL modules. They would like to showcase these to practitioners to show how they might wish to use them within their schools.

WASACRE will raise this as a particular issue as WG promised that there would be further modules and WASACRE believes there is a need for further modules. If member SACs agree with that, then this is something WASACRE could raise with WG.

TaS: All the modules that are currently being worked on should be completed and published. In the original plan, though, there was going to be a humanities module and a progression module, various things happened, and they became conflated. It is important to make sure that we still have the progression module and to say to WG that this is part of the original package.

PW: Suggest we need to keep a watching eye on any professional learning that's been developed for other mandatory subjects in the curriculum. Is RVE being treated fairly?

TaS: Confirmed that members agreed with LJ's suggestion of arguing strongly for additional modules. The WG are looking at the usage of the playlists. The figures look good on Hwb, but it does put some responsibility on us to ensure that our schools and practitioners are aware of them. A huge amount of work has gone into creating these resources. They are of a high quality; they are locally relevant because of the way they've been set up and constructed. Practitioners critically engage with them, and make them relevant, or interrogate them from their own local contexts. It would be great if we could promote them in our local authorities and into our local schools and try and increase the usage numbers.

ACTION: All members to promote the playlists which can be found using this link: <https://hwb.gov.wales/repository/resource/eef7e399-93bb-4d7c-ab68-145c93f4c6d3/en/overview>

ACTION: WASACRE to discuss with WG the requirement for further modules.

8. WASACRE conference

TaS: WASACRE in collaboration with NAPfRE are organising a substantial conference for 2024. The conference is going to be an opportunity to celebrate religion, values and ethics and the value and distinctiveness of what we are doing in Wales. The conference is also going to provide a significant professional learning opportunity for our member SACs and for all their schools. In addition to having an in-person day conference in the summer term of 2024, there will be a series of interactive online seminars, which will happen both prior and post conference day.

A WASACRE working group has been set up and has invited Jeremy Miles, the Minister for Education and Welsh language to be a keynote speaker for the physical conference. We are waiting for a response. We have put forward to him the month of June. WASACRE will confirm as soon as a response has been received.

TaS shared the conference logos to be used for promotion. TaS thanked JD for her work on creating the logos.

The working group is looking to identify potential areas of focus for the free interactive online seminars. Several suggestions have been received some of which have come from local SACREs and SACs and their advisors. However, we would like to engage with SACs

more fully in this process, to have a real idea of what your local needs are and your responses to some of the suggestions already made.

TaS ran through an online survey which will be distributed to all members to obtain feedback on the ideas for the conference seminars. There will be seminars for several different audiences. Links to survey for onward distribution to SACs and practitioners:

Welsh: <https://forms.office.com/e/23GF0c9RUG>

English: <https://forms.office.com/e/u6HV5uNHY2>

Deadline for completion of the survey will be end of November.

DG: We are having quite a few inquiries regarding daily acts of collective worship. With the inspections, it is on people's radar.

LB: It looks like a comprehensive questionnaire. In terms of the curriculum, it is basically Christianity and other principal religions and non-religious philosophical convictions. There was a question about philosophy for children, I don't think that is necessary as it is not part of the RVE curriculum. Regarding collective worship, the legislation had no changes on collective worship, which should still be broadly Christian in nature.

PW: Very good questionnaire. Philosophy for children is a well-established pedagogical approach to teaching. We will be looking at pedagogies as well as curriculum and because we do need to drill down now into how the curriculum can be delivered, this is just one of the methods that could be used.

PL: Is there an opportunity to put forward names for people to conduct the seminars?

TaS: All suggestions are well received and can be detailed in the survey.

ACTION: AP to email the links to all SACRE clerks before half term.

ACTION: Links in the chat document to be distributed to members.

9. Qualifications

- **Qualifications Wales**
- **Equality and diversity qualification (ncfe)**

RS gave a presentation bilingually on the current situation and next steps. The presentation will be distributed to the members.

LJ: As there won't be an examinable assessment for RVE once there is no short course between 2025 -2027, there is an option with the Agored qualification 'Exploring World Views' where coursework units are assessed. Level 1 qualification is GCSE D-G and level 2 qualification A* to C. It is an option for schools now and up to 2027. It is not an exam qualification, but it has been designed specifically for RVE and RE using both the legacy and new agreed syllabi.

MM: We will look at the Agored qualification. It is disappointing that they're not having the short course anymore. We would let all the pupils sit the short course, and those who did well, and could cope, go on to do the full course. We had a curriculum, which was very much pupil centred, and was fit for each pupil.

I feel there is a need for some sort of qualification, which will motivate pupils in terms of mandatory religion, values, and ethics. The worry I have is that it might then deter pupils from opting for the GCSE course. How are schools going to manage their curriculum for those who have opted for the GCSE? Do they not complete the mandatory obligation? I'm assuming that the humanities skills qualification has an RVE element but isn't enough to fulfil the mandatory RVE requirements.

With the Agored coursework elements, it may not make it available to all pupils because you only have a few teachers to mark the coursework and it could become unmanageable.

RS: From my understanding from the consultation, the mandatory qualification will be available to level one but not to level two.

TaS: WASACRE consultation response asked for up to level two for RVE which is important.

LB: Only had a quick glance through this consultation but it seems a very generalist type of curriculum and doesn't seem to cover the statutory requirements in terms of Christianity and other principal religions and range of non-philosophical convictions. I can't even see Christianity and other principal religions mentioned at all. So, I think it's not meeting the statutory RVE requirement. I can't understand why it's changed from the original consultation which set out specific subject areas that were being covered.

RS: We need more time to review the consultation in detail. We must be aware that this is a consultation and a document developed by WJEC, whereas the consultation on the approval criteria was led by Qualifications Wales. The two documents serve different purposes.

PW: Not having the old short course has a knock-on effect on A level, undergraduate, and then ITE numbers. Who is responsible for the response to the consultation?

TaS: Confirmed WASACRE will draft a response and circulate to local SACs.

KR: I think there's a real disconnect between this statutory requirement for RVE and the RS GCSE. Neither will meet the statutory requirements, nor will it deliver a subject that's available to all children at 16. I feel if the design of the new GCSE had full regard to the RVE guidance, and provided a qualification that met that RVE guidance, just as the other subjects have, we wouldn't be in this position where we are now. I know that's the feedback that we gave from the consultation that came from Qualifications Wales. This seems to have taken now to another level. I suggest WASACRE needs to ask for an audience with WJEC or Qualifications Wales to discuss the matter. I'd like to see WASACRE being proactive in this matter.

RS: Suggests that the Executive Committee meet to discuss this initially. It is important that WASACRE keeps the lines of communication open with Qualifications Wales, WJEC, and all other relevant parties to navigate a way forward.

TaS: It is complicated and there are strongly held views. Agree to meet with members of the Executive Committee to discuss further. The closing date of the consultation is the 15th November 2023.

ACTION: RS to send out an email to the Executive Committee requesting a meeting.

PW: As the consultation document was only published this morning. I haven't looked at it in depth. However, I am deeply concerned about a footnote that is found in the documentation that states '*specification content will be driven by an emphasis of beliefs, teachings and practices of religious rather than non-religious content due to the nature of the subject.*' I would urge WASACRE to have a look at that footnote and ensure that equity of religious and non-religious aspects is considered as per the European Court of Human Rights legislation.

KRU: Emphasised that Qualification Wales hasn't made a decision yet. We are working through the summer responses and conducting additional work.

LB: I think that Christianity and other principal religions is an important aspect of RVE. I think it needs to emphasise that there must be a range of non-philosophical beliefs because it doesn't say, a range of religious beliefs in the legislation.

TaS: it's important to highlight this consultation with your local SACs and SACREs. WASACRE will share a draft response.

10. Presentation by Alice Parry: Through the eyes of a teacher: Report from the Conference of the European Forum for Teachers of Religious Education (EFTRE)

Alice Parry, Head of Department at Llanishen High School in Cardiff reported back from her attendance at the 15th EFTRE conference in Rome which was titled 'Bridges over troubled waters – RE in changing times':

Conference introduction: *Current times in Europe easily feel as if several storms are raging at once, with increasing nationalisms, polarisation, and pluralization. As well as the pandemic climate change and not least war in Ukraine, no calm seas seem incite. A challenge for all and especially for the young children and adolescents growing up in these demanding times. One can easily feel overwhelmed disorientated, as if pushed under the water by the waves of these developments. At the EFTRE conference together, we are looking for safe bridges to find a path into a brighter future, you'll have opportunities to analyse how are we can and must adapt to this new scenery and contemporary European societies.*

There were a variety of different lectures, different workshops, and different visits that participants were able to choose from. It was an opportunity to connect with teachers and other professionals all over Europe. I attended three key lectures and workshops, and I would like to share what I learnt.

First session - there was a research project conducted by five researchers across five countries about the impact of COVID and what really matters in RE. The purpose of the project was to allow teachers to share their experience and to stimulate a reflection on religious education, especially after the COVID pandemic. It was heart-warming to me as a teacher seeing that other practitioners across Europe were also finding similarities in the experience of moving online, experiences about both student and staff wellbeing, life questions that were arising, understanding of religious education, teacher situations, relationships, the importance of networking, co working, but also the importance of teacher/student relationships that you have in the classroom.

The challenges also brought existential matters where students were enabled to explore life's big questions. But also, there are sensitive topics that just can't be taught and approached in the same way through the online space. Covid did force people to stop, pause and think about the nature of the subject and what that value has for students. It was reported that philosophies become more popular, there's a surge in interest and in people questioning their purpose.

What was nice about attending this conference was meeting teachers from across Europe, and sharing experiences of what teaching is like in different settings, not just RE but with general logistics of the school in the calendar year day, and how things operate in different contexts.

Another workshop I attended was led by Marlene Printz Jellesen (MPJ) who works in Denmark and did her PhD thesis on secularisation and the implications that particular narratives of secularisation can have for religious education.

MPJ presented four narratives of the secularisation hypothesis:

The idea that when teaching, religion it is solely a private matter, this could be seen as having no purpose in society and could have implications for religious education becoming a taboo subject, as she experienced in Denmark. MPJ said if religion is seen as a private matter, it can be difficult to legitimise the place and value of our country. In that instance, the school wouldn't provide students and prepare students for the pluralistic society and the wider the wider scope.

The idea of religion and faith being the opposite of knowledge and a danger that can be posed. MPJ mentioned how conflicts can arise between religion and faith and knowledge. And the implications for RE narrative is that religion could be seen as outdated and a thing of the past where people knew less rather than offering a multifaceted and rich approach to our worldviews. Under this narrative teaching secularisation religion could be constructed as contradictory to science and science is seen as factual with truth, whereas religion would not be. That would be a problem for religious education teachers with that narrative.

The idea that religion could be weakened and that there would be a decline in membership of religious institutions and increase in the number of people with no religious affiliation. In that case, the implications for RE would be that pupils might gain a conviction that religion is an outdated phenomenon, that's going to disappear, and a risk of passing that narrative on to students and being an overly simplistic view.

The idea that religion is a phenomenon of deprivation. This linked to a study that she shared from Phil Zuckerman in Denmark and Sweden, which was the Deprivation Theory, the idea of a society without God. The study looked at Danish people who could have a very good quality of life or could be happy, even without God. So that could lead to a one-sided deprivation approach to religion. MJP shared that religious students criticise their teachers for supporting the stereotypical presentation of religion as a historically outdated phenomenon and emphasise the importance of giving students that pluralistic and multifaceted approach to understanding religion and non-religion through that.

The third session that I would like to share with you was one based on art. This was presented by a lecturer at University of Glasgow, Leon Robinson, about what makes life worth living and using artwork in lessons to add some depth and richness to the curriculum.

LR asked us to think of three things that you love in life, but it couldn't be people, it couldn't be pets. It had to be objects or scenery or something like that and he asked us to share that with the person next to us.

The purpose of this was that LR wanted us to understand and reinforce the importance and the richness of objects and that can start with the personal and then you can allow students to appreciate religious objects and how we teach that through the curriculum.

LR mentioned that this starts with Hippocrates, who was talking about the craft that takes a long time, the mastery of work and how we need to ask ourselves, what is our craft? And what do we want to master. And he linked to Japanese tsukumogami which is the idea that when an object has been used for 99 years, in Japanese culture, it's believed that they develop kami and come alive.

We visited the Vatican and with LR we were able to explore the art at the Vatican. The artwork that we were able to see was captivating, and really did help me to, to think about how I'm going to use some pieces in my lessons going forward.

I feel extremely lucky to have had that opportunity to be part of the EFTRE conference to meet with colleagues and to learn from others from different backgrounds, different contexts, different settings and bringing that back to my classroom.

TaS: Thank you Alice. LJ and TaS also attended conference, it was extremely worthwhile.

PW: I hope the WASACRE conference in the summer will be equally as inspiring to the teachers that attend. Maybe we can learn something from the delivery because it sounded fantastic. Thank you, Alice.

VB: Thank you, Alice, it's wonderful to capture those moments of joy and to bring a little bit of joy to everybody on the call.

11. Estyn: 2024 – 2030 inspection plans

The Estyn representative was unable to attend the meeting. This item has been carried forward to the next meeting.

12. Up-dates:

- Report from the Executive Committee held on 4 October 2023 (Tania ap Sion)

No update provided. Items covered in meeting agenda.

- WJEC (Christopher Owens)

During the summer, candidates were entered for all papers for GCSE religious studies, except for Sikhism, where there were no entries and there was only one entry paper the previous year. Entries remain stable, but I'll have more information in March 2024 when I have the final entry. Interestingly, there were very few requests for review of marking. We see this as a positive, in that perhaps people were very happy with the results that they had in terms of the consultation, which is a WJEC qualification outline, it is not a specification. It doesn't go into detail about content in terms of Christianity, world faiths, non-religious viewpoints etc. This is a WJEC qualification outline based on the agreed criteria which has been produced by Qualifications Wales. We will look at any comments that come in from teachers and other interested parties. The process of writing the specification will begin after this consultation is concluded. We have had feedback that we will take into consideration. It has already been said that the short course will finish what will become the legacy GCSE finishes. I was asked to mention that there is a humanities entry pathways course offered by the WJEC it's not a GCSE, it's all NEA based, but could be used as an option,

There are WJEC professional learning events taking place this term on 8th, 20th, 21st November, and 7th December and a CYDAG event in North Wales on the 8th December.

The only other thing I'd say about the GCSE consultation is that we've produced a GCSE Religious Studies course. It was never intended and has never been intended to fulfil any statutory obligation, following on from the RVE.

KR: It just seems to be a real missed opportunity. Under the new curriculum, there's a RVE statutory requirement as an academic subject. It is one of the subjects in the humanities suite alongside Geography and History and Business Studies, which each have their unique GCSE linked to that subject. So why is RVE being treated different in that it's not being given a respective GCSE that meets the requirement to study? It being that it is the only humanities area that has that requirement to study.

CO: The GCSE RS sits within the humanities option subjects. GCSE RS in this context has always been an option subject. Obviously RVE is statutory, but the GCSE option sits outside that, the same as History and geography, pupils don't have to do history or geography in year 10 or 11.

TaS: Added that there has been much consideration over this, and many meetings have been held to discuss this matter with various relevant parties.

LB: There is going to be an issue if it doesn't cover the mandatory requirement. It is going to dissuade learners from doing that option because they will have to do the mandatory requirement as well. It will be double the teaching.

AP shared feedback from the summer's GCSE. A high percentage of candidates A-C at A level and AS level. Good to see entries for all world religions. RS has had a massive hit in terms of AS numbers. during the COVID years, I think there's several reasons for that. One being I think RS is not the sort of subject you can learn by zoom at home. You need interaction with your teacher in a way that perhaps you don't need in other subjects such as history or geography.

Entries for GCSE have fallen massively. I think they will reduce by about 6000 this summer. The issue of non-specialist teachers teaching both key stage three and key stage four. The disappearance of the short course will have an effect. There are competing courses such as criminology. Many of the people who would have taken RS and are taking criminology instead. If AS numbers are going down, the A level numbers are going to follow.

PL: Is there a reduction in the number of centres in that popular schools that would have entered are no longer entering and / or are those centres reducing the numbers of those pupils that they're entering?

AP: It's not a reduction in centres as such, it's more of a reduction of the numbers within each centre. Whereas in the past, they would have been, high teens or 20s, we're getting numbers under 10 in many centres now.

PL: In comparison with the GCSE, I presume there are less centres that are entering because of the issues with the old short course, for example. I was wondering, is that not necessarily affecting the centre's entering for A level, but it will affect the numbers that are doing it?

AP: To some extent as well. However, if you have 6000 less entries this summer for GCSE, then less AS numbers. There was a slight increase in AS this summer by 100, this is good because that obviously will lead through to year 13. Whether that pattern continues this year, will be interesting to see.

TaS: PW and I are having conversations, we are very much aware of the wider issues which you've raised in terms of teacher recruitment, specialists and so on. I think the benefit of what we have heard today is raising this on the agenda of SACs and on WASACRE agenda. We need to talk further with NAPfRE about how we tackle this kind of crisis. What steps are we going to take and what can we do?

TaS: Thanked CO and AP for the updates.

- **REC (Kathy Riddick)**

There haven't been many meetings since WASACRE last met. The co-opted position that was advertised for a specialist in RVE to sit on the board of the REC is currently being considered. The Board are going to decide next week as to who will be appointed in that position. It is a new position created to make sure that the REC pay more attention to what's happening in Wales and have somebody who's an expert in RVE. This is a real improved position, as the REC sees itself as wanting to continue to be a representative body of England and Wales. In the first term of next year REC are publishing the new religion and worldviews draft resource, and they continue to lobby the Department of Education in England to change the name of the subject to religion and worldviews.

- **EFTRE (Phil Lord)**

Resources for the conference can be found on the website: <https://eftre.net/conference-in-rome-2023-15th>.

- **REMW (Paul Morgan)**

No updated provided.

- **NAPfRE (Paula Webber)**

The NAPfRE meeting has been delayed until after half term. NAPfRE are engaging with WASACRE in the organisation of the WASACRE conference. Met with Deborah Weston from the REC and had discussions about GCSE, A level and ITE take up. Also note that RS was representing NAPfRE as well as WASACRE at the Welsh Government meeting. PW now sits on the advisory group for the development of the new Quals with WJEC. NAPfRE intend to organise additional meetings this year.

- **IFN (Libby Jones)**

Interfaith week is the 12th -19th of November 2023. [Interfaith week resources.](#)

TaS: An email was received from Gethin Rhys (GR) of Cytûn and Inter Faith Council Wales. With the new curriculum, schools need to know how and when to contact to their faith groups. GR is keen to work with WASACRE and local schools. There was a specific request for WASACRE to consider joining the Inter Faith Council of Wales? Also, a request from Cytûn as to how best they can help in WASACRE's work. The Executive Committee welcome the offer and will take this forward.

13. Local matters / enquiries

TaS: This is a new agenda item. We know that WASACRE carries out an incredible amount of national and international work on behalf of SACs. WASACRE also provides support at a local level too. This local work is not necessarily visible, having this agenda item is a way of providing a space to focus on this area of our work.

We receive many inquiries and questions from local SACs and advisors about a whole range of things. Our advisors on the Executive Committee spend time in discussion and respond to them. These are all very local nature, but they're also relevant more widely.

TaS shared a document which showed a range of questions that have been asked recently. The aim is to put together a frequently asked questions document that can be displayed on the website.

Questions included managing requests to withdraw from the mandatory RVE on religious grounds, looking at professional learning and what's available to access as a RVE advisor, what alternative qualifications are available to learners in Key Stage Four? SAC / SACRE meetings. We have quite a few requests for templates of forms.

WASACRE have decided to allocate time at each termly meeting to focus on one or two questions and share them more widely.

LJ: Gave an example of one question. A question was sent from a school that had received a parent request for withdrawal of their child from RVE based on their religious identity. The question was how to manage this with the parent, because obviously for another year, there is no right to withdraw.

WASACRE are still working with that local authority to find a solution, but we have given various pieces of advice on what can be done. WASACRE are listening to that local authority and keeping in touch with them about how that translates and what transpires.

WASACRE will raise this with Welsh Government in one of the regular meetings. This could be a wider issue and not isolated. Has any other SACRES / SACs or LAs had a question about this from any of their schools?

TaS: Welsh Government are keen to find out about this with the curriculum roll-out. From the chat one parent in Ceredigion has made a similar request and the same in Powys.

PL: Conwy SACRE Chair asked me this yesterday. We had to do a report for the local authority regarding the agreed syllabus, one of our questions was going to be about writing withdrawals for travellers' children and the impact that might have on removal from school completely. How do we go about finding hard data to this question? Is there data for within a local authority on the removal of children from education? Are there any links between that and RVE?

VB: It's not an area I cover but I think when parents give a reason as to why they might be removing their children to educate at home, I don't think RVE would be an option that would come up and possibly it would be registered under the 'other' option. There is a statistical release by WG every year on this data, but I am not sure it identifies RVE as a cause to remove from education.

KR: This is a slightly different query that came up with us from a non-religious parent who had been requested by a VC school that they withdraw their child so that they could use RVE lessons to teach comprehension. This is obviously not correct, because RVE is not for that purpose and the agreed syllabus should be followed. Following a conversation with the Diocesan rep in the local area, the matter was resolved, because the school just needed some extra support. When these issues are coming up, it's important that the level of dialogue is there to make sure that we're supporting schools and helping them get this right.

14. Correspondence

None other than correspondence already mentioned in meeting.

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

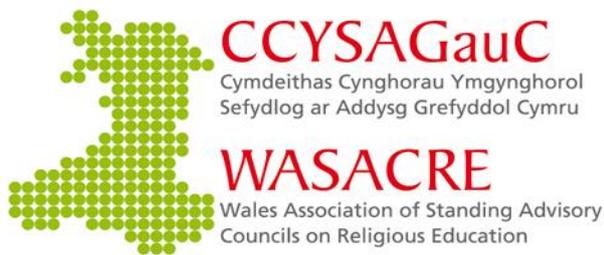
Caroline Davis joined us today. Caroline is a humanist observer and is on Powys SACRE.

TaS: Thank you very much for turning up for the meeting today and for your full participation. A big thank you to RCT the local authority for hosting. We look forward to seeing you or as many of you as possible at our next meeting.

16. Date for next meeting

No date or host details available at the time of the meeting.

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Cadeirydd /Chair:
The Revd Dr Tania ap Siôn
Gelli Wen, Llanfairpwllgwyngyll, Anglesey, LL61 6EQ
e-bost/e-mail: smc.taniaapsion@gmail.com

Ysgrifennydd/Secretary:
Ms Alice Parry
39 Galleon Way, Cardiff Bay, CF10 4JA
e-bost/e-mail: ParryA274@hwbcymru.net
ffôn/tel: 07779 168084

6 February 2024

Dear Clerk to SAC / SACRE,

Following our normal annual process, I am writing to invite SAC / SACREs to make nominations for new members of the WASACRE Executive Committee. Please would your SAC / SACRE discuss any nomination that they wish to make at their spring term SAC / SACRE meeting. Please note that if your SAC / SACRE is already represented on the Executive committee, with the exception of Secretary, Assistant Secretary and Treasurer, according to the WASACRE Constitution you will not be able to nominate a person from your own SAC / SACRE at this time. However, this does not prevent you from nominating a person from another SAC / SACRE.

You will notice in the attached members list that there are two places available: one Vice Chair position and one Executive member position. It is vital for WASACRE to retain a full and varied membership in order to continue its good work. As such we ask for your careful consideration of this request and hope that we receive some nominations.

Please find attached a proforma that should be completed and returned to me at the above email/postal address by **Friday 22 March 2024**. I will send to you the list of the nominations before **Friday 26 April 2024**, so that your SAC / SACRE is able to discuss them in their summer term meeting in time for the vote at the Association's AGM in June.

Please note there is an expectation that nominees will be available to attend executive meetings regularly should they be successful in the election at the AGM.

We would like to thank you and your members for your assistance in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A Parry

Alice Parry

Secretary to WASACRE



Aelodaeth Pwyllgor Gwaith CCYSAGauC / Membership of WASACRE Executive Committee 2023/2024

Cadeirydd / Chair – Rev. Dr Tania ap Sion (Wrecsam / Wrexham)

Is-Gadeirydd / Vice Chair – Rev. Edward J. Evans (Pen-y-bont / Bridgend)

Ysgrifennydd / Secretary – Alice Parry (Pen-y-bont / Bridgend)

Ysgrifennydd Cynorthwyol / Assistant Secretary - Libby Jones (Wrecsam / Wrexham)

Trysorydd / Treasurer – John Mitson (Powys)

Cyn-Gadeirydd diweddaraf / Immediate Past Chair – Rachel Samuel (CNP / Neath Port Talbot)

Cynrychiolydd o PYCAG / Representative of NAPfRE – Paula Webber

Aelodau cyffredinol / Executive members:

Kathy Riddick - Blaenau Gwent /Blaenau Gwent (2021-2024)

Vicky Barlow - Sir y Fflint / Flintshire (2022- 2025)

Louise Brown - Sir Fynwy / Monmouthshire (2022-2025)

Mathew Maidment - Rhondda Cynon Taff / Rhondda Cynon Taf (2022-2025)

Jennie Downes - Sir Ddinbych / Denbighshire (2023-2026)

Marged Williams and Tyler Saunders - Bro Morgannwg / Vale of Glamorgan (2023-2026) *

*rhannu swydd / job share



**Enwebiadau ar gyfer Pwyllgor Gwaith CCYSAGauC/
Nominations to WASACRE Executive Committee**

2024

ENW CYS / CYSAG / SAC / SACRE NAME:

Enwebiad / Nomination	Enw / Name	Cyfeiriad e-bost/ E-mail address
Is-Gadeirydd / Vice Chair		

Enwebiad / Nomination	Enw / Name	Cyfeiriad e-bost/ E-mail address
Aelod Pwyllgor gwaith / Executive committee member		

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Visit to Ysgol Bodffordd 08.02.2024

1. What is the nature of collective worship at Ysgol Bodffordd?

At the end of each day, pupils come together for a class service. On Friday the school comes together for a collective service. This is an opportunity to thank for the past week and to wish everyone an enjoyable weekend. The daily service experienced by us here today was Christian. They addressed some form of ethics, and the theme was “love is not...arrogant”.

The children had the opportunity to guess the meaning of the word arrogance and went on to explain the importance of love and kindness, noting that God wants us to show love (the Old Testament) and Jesus in the New Testament. The pupils had the opportunity to contribute by sharing their experience of doing something kind that morning. There was an example of one making a sandwich for their mother to have for lunch, and another held the door for their sister. The importance of apologising was discussed, and it was explained that it is sometimes acceptable to raise your voice to get your point across, but that it is important not to use arrogance.

Each pupil could recite the school’s rules openly: “Kind Words, Kind Hands, Kind Feet”, and I felt that these three things set a robust foundation for Bodffordd’s pupils as they grow up.

2. What experiences do and will the children receive in the religion and ethics area of learning in the new curriculum?

- Year 6 Task: “Who is God?”

The pupils look at different religions and are currently comparing God or gods.

(It may be possible to put it up on the Anglesey SACRE HwB afterwards? Just an idea! And Rhys’ permission would of course be required to do this as I didn’t think about it until I returned home. What do you think?)

- Chinese Festival: new year
- Easter: theme after half term

3. How can Anglesey SACRE support the school(s)?

I understood that there was a better link between SACRE and the schools in the past. Gradually, the link moved to become a questionnaire. The contact is now very sparse. Mr Roberts welcomed a visit from members of the SACRE today. Appreciate having a better link with SACRE.

The idea was raised of creating a page on the SACRE HwB on Anglesey’s local pilgrimages, and the Headteacher warmed very much to this idea. He

was happy to contribute and would consider it to be a useful resource with local orientation.

- I learnt about the “Open the Book” process, where pupils have an opportunity to dress up and act parts of the Bible. Fun! This happens here in Bodffordd around every 5-6 weeks. (I wonder whether there is scope for a presentation by them in the SACRE some time?)

And there we are, a short but purposeful visit that opened the discussion for more collaboration, sharing ideas and looking for new ways to help each other.

Isle of Anglesey County Council	
MEETING:	SACRE / County Council
DATE:	February 21 st / March 7 th , 2024
TITLE OF REPORT:	Membership and constitution of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)
AUTHOR:	Jane Ashman
HEAD OF SERVICE	Marc Berw Hughes, Director of Education, Skills and Young People
PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:	For the Council to agree to amend the membership and name of the SACRE following the legislative changes arising as a result of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021
CONTACT OFFICER:	Jane Ashman

1. Background:

Under the Education Act 1996 (EA1996), the Local Education Authority (LEA) has a duty to establish a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE).

As a result of legislative changes to sections 390 to 392 of the EA1996, brought about by the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 (CA(W)A2021), the requirement that a local authority constitute a SACRE has been replaced, subject to a transitional period, by a requirement to constitute a Standing Advisory Council (SAC) on Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE).

The brief of the SAC is broader than that of SACRE in that it encompasses not only religion but the RVEs (values and ethics) of the new Curriculum for Wales Framework.

In addition to the broader brief, the composition of SAC differs from that of the former SACRE in that it must now include representatives who hold non-religious philosophical convictions.

The EA1996, as amended, stipulates that SAC should include the following group of members (additional elements, as added by the CA(W)A2021 in italics):

- A group of persons that represents the Christian denominations and other religions and denominations of such religions, *and non-religious philosophical convictions* - that in the LEA's judgment, *reflect broadly the proportionate strength of that religion, denomination or non-religious philosophical conviction in the area;*
- A group that represents the associations of those teachers whom the LEA judge should be represented, taking the area's circumstances into consideration; and
- A group to represent the LEA.

It is also possible to have co-opted members; they do not have voting rights.

In order to comply with legislation, and in accordance with [SACRE's decision in November 2020](#) to review its Constitution when legislative changes were introduced by Welsh

Government, work has been done by officers in the Learning Service, and which support SACRE, to review the membership of religious and non-religious representatives.

2. Review of Membership:

The legislation does not provide details of which religions, denominations or non-religious philosophical convictions need to be considered for inclusion on SAC. The legislation also does not offer guidance on the data that should be relied upon in order to allocate seats; it details that it is a decision for the LEA based on a view that the membership broadly reflects the proportionate strength of that religion, denomination or non-religious philosophical conviction in the area.

The current membership of relevant representatives, which has not been reviewed for many years, includes six Christian denominations and no representatives from other religions or non-religious philosophical convictions.

Officers from Learning Service have undertaken a desktop analysis of religious and non-religious groups in Anglesey. The detail of the process undertaken and the findings made are as follows:

➤ **Census:**

The review conducted by officers from the Learning Service considered the [results, for Anglesey, of the religion question within the 2021 Census](#) as a starting point, whilst bearing in mind that the Census question on religion was an optional one and so the results may not be an absolute reflection of the population's religious/non-religious beliefs, but it should be noted that only 6.5% of the people of Anglesey did not answer this question. The full results are included in **Enclosure 1**.

➤ **Further investigation:**

Correspondence was sent by officers from the Learning Service to the groups listed in **Enclosure 2** to this report with a request for information on membership numbers for Anglesey. Correspondence was initially sent on 11.08.2023; a reminder was sent on 18.08.2023 with a request for responses by 23.08.2023. To ensure that all groups were given a reasonable opportunity to respond to this request for information, and so that contact could be made with representatives from the Quaker denomination and Sikhism religion (who were not included in the first cohort), further correspondence was sent by officers from the Learning Service on 06.10.2023, and a reminder sent on 25.10.2023; responses were expected by 06.11.2023. Details of the responses received by the Learning Service, are included in **Enclosure 2**.

3. Conclusion:

The data obtained in this exercise is incomplete.

- The Census information (**Enclosure 1**) provides a general view of religion/non-religion on Anglesey but it does not provide the detail to ascertain the strength of the different denominations.
- There have been very few responses to the correspondence sent by the Learning Service to the identified groups detailed in **Enclosure 2**.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the following recommendation is based on the imperfect data currently available, it follows reasonable attempts by the Learning Service to

ascertain the relevant information. It is unlikely that allowing a delay in order to carry out further consultation would result in any further data being made available; this recommendation is therefore considered to be a reasonable proposal in all the circumstances.:-

A. Christianity

As the Census figures show that Christianity is the most populated answer to this query and remains the strongest religion in Anglesey (35,485 people / 51.5%) it is reasonable and in accordance with the legislation that it continues to hold the majority of seats on SAC.

There are many denominations within Christianity. The Census does not explore in any more detail than this and so it isn't possible to determine information about the different denominations that make up this response.

Six different denominations are currently represented on SACRE, namely Presbyterian Church of Wales; Baptist Union of Wales; Union of Welsh Independents; Catholic Church; Methodist Church and Church in Wales. These, and others, were contacted by the Learning Service for current membership figures; the responses are included in **section (a) of Enclosure 2**.

Whilst there are only limited direct responses to requests for membership numbers from many of the Christian denominations, it is apparent that Church in Wales, Catholics and protestant non-conformists are represented in Anglesey, and on that basis **it is suggested that the six current Christian denominations continue to be offered one seat each on SAC**.

As noted in **section (a) of Enclosure 2**, there are 500 Jehovah's Witness members on Anglesey, a figure that is far higher than the membership numbers obtained from the Baptist Union of Wales and the Methodist Church (both of whom are already represented on SACRE). The response is similar to the membership number for the Union of Welsh Independents (a representative of whom already has a seat on SACRE). On the basis of this figure, obtained directly in response to the Learning Service's enquiries with them, **it is suggested that a Jehovah's Witness representative be allocated a seat on SAC**.

B. No religion

The second most populated answer to the Census question was that of "no religion" (28,066 people / 40.7%). This is a wide-ranging response and can include a range of individuals that may or may not identify with a belief system e.g. atheist; agnostic; spiritual but not religious, etc.; though it is apparent from the Office for National Statistics' data (**Enclosure 1**) that some members of these groups have noted their response under "other" rather than "no religion", and so the number is not entirely reliable. The option 'other' had a result of 0.4% in Anglesey.

It is reasonable to consider that a percentage of those that responded as having "no religion" are not part of any group, and on that basis, there is no obvious representative for this large proportion of the population. It is not possible to appoint an individual that simply identifies as being of "no religion"; the individual must be a representative of a *non-religious philosophical conviction*, the statutory definition of which must show a conviction

(not an idea or an opinion) that attains a certain level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance.

Possible groups that satisfy this definition of a *non-religious philosophical conviction* were identified and contacted by the Learning Service officers; their responses are included in **section (b) of Enclosure 2**.

On the basis that the relevant SAC representatives must now include representation of persons who hold a non-religious philosophical conviction, if the LEA considers that appointing such persons reflects the proportionate strength of that religion, denomination or non-religious philosophical conviction in the area, it appears reasonable that a seat is offered to a group that can satisfy this definition.

Whilst the numbers for Humanists UK members in Anglesey is unknown, on the basis no other groups are known / information known to be able to consider, **it appears reasonable to offer a seat on SAC to a representative of Humanists UK in order to ensure there is representation for a non-religious philosophical conviction perspective on the Isle of Anglesey County Council's SAC.**

It is accepted that Humanists UK do not represent the views of all those identifying as having "no religion" or "other" in the Census. However, as an organisation, it satisfies the legislative definition of representing persons with a non-religious philosophical conviction. Humanists UK have seats on several other SACs too.

C. Other non-Christian religions

The Census figures (**Enclosure 1**) indicate very low numbers for other non-Christian religions, ranging from 328 (Muslim) to Jewish and Sikh, both with 30 each. **Section (c) of Enclosure 2** details the responses received to the correspondence from the Learning Service from those religions identified on the Census list of possible responses.

The Census results show that the strongest non-Christian religion in Anglesey is Islam. It is therefore reasonable to **allocate one seat to a representative of Islam on SAC.**

4. Possible Options

Do nothing and fail to meet statutory requirements.

- Not updating the membership requirement for SAC runs the risk that the Authority is not meeting its legal obligations and that SAC is not properly constituted, thereby exposing any decision the SAC makes to the potential risk of legal challenge.

Make changes that comply with statutory requirements.

- Recommending the proposed changes will help to ensure the Authority is complying with its legal requirement for SAC.
- The Committee must contain representatives from other interests (as detailed in section 1 of this report) in order to function as a working committee; the proposal to have a total of 9 religious/non-religious representatives is reasonable and complies with the legal requirement.

5. Recommendation:

- 1) That full Council agrees to amend the name for SACRE to SAC and for its terms of reference to be included in the Council's Constitution by the Monitoring Officer, in accordance with the legislative requirement for SAC; and
- 2) That on the basis the local authority must take all reasonable steps to secure that the membership is broadly proportionate to the strength of each religion, denomination, or non-religious philosophical conviction, in its local area, full Council agrees that the membership of SAC includes a total of 9 seats, made up of 6 seats to the current members and an additional 3 new seats, as follows:

1	Humanists UK (<i>additional</i>)
2	Baptist Union of Wales
3	Islam (<i>additional</i>)
4	Jehovah's Witness (<i>additional</i>)
5	Presbyterian Church of Wales
6	Union of Welsh Independents
7	The Catholic Church
8	Methodist Church
9	Church in Wales

2021 Census results for Anglesey

The religion people connect or identify with, as detailed in the 2021 Census results for Anglesey (and following the same reporting order):

	Number of responses in the 2021 Census
No religion	40.7% (28,066)
Christian	51.5% (35,485)
Buddhist	0.2% (154)
Hindu	0.1%(62)
Jewish	0% (30)
Muslim	0.5% (328)
Sikh	0% (30)
Other religion	0.4% (278)
Not answered	6.5% (4,446)

[The Office for National Statistics](#) details that, of those that answered “other” across England and Wales (not specific for Anglesey) the following were some of the more common religious groups noted: Alevi, Jain, Pagan, Ravidassia, Rastafarian, Shamanism, Wicca and Zoroastrian; and the non-religious groups named were: Agnostic, Atheist and Humanist.

Enclosure 2

Membership of different groups/organisations on Anglesey

An email/contact form was sent by the Learning Service to the listed groups on 11.08.2023 to request membership numbers. A reminder email was sent on 18.08.2023 asking for a response by 23.08.2023.

Further contact was made by the Learning Service on 06.10.2023 to those groups that had not responded to the above request for information. Responses were requested by 6.11.2023. A telephone call / email reminder was made on 25.10.2023.

a. Christian Denominations:

Number of responses in the 2021 Census: 35,485

	Number of members in Anglesey detailed by each group
Quaker	25
Presbyterian Church of Wales	No response received
English Presbyterian Church	No contact details could be ascertained
Pentecostal Church	135
Pioneer Church	80
Jehovah's Witness	500
Baptist Union of Wales	168
Union of Welsh Independents	488
The Catholic Church	255
Methodist Church	61
Church in Wales	No response received

b. No religion:

Number of responses in the 2021 Census

- No religion 40.7% (28,066)
- Not answered 6.5% (4,446)
- Other 0.4% (278)

	Number of responses in the 2021 Census	Number of members in Anglesey detailed by each group
Humanist UK	Not an option in the Census	Unknown. 4,000 in Wales.
Anglesey Druid Order	Not an option in the Census	No response received

c. Other religions:

	Number of responses in the 2021 Census	Number of members in Anglesey detailed by each group
Buddhism	154	No contact details available. Closest group is Llandudno.
Hinduism	62	No contact details available. No references online to any Hindu temples or societies in North Wales.
Judaism	30	Response details this information is unknown. Closest group is Llandudno.
Islam	328	Response details this information is unknown. No mosques in Anglesey; Bangor Islamic Centre is closest.
Sikhism	30	No response received

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