



**Cyfarfod Cymdeithas CYSAGau Cymru, Ebbw Vale, 25 Tachwedd 2015 (10.30am – 3pm)**

***Wales Association of SACREs meeting, Ebbw Vale, 25 November 2015 (10.30am – 3pm)***

## **Minutes**

Musical ensemble and children's choir from Blaenau Gwent schools:

- Blaenau Gwent Music Centre Guitar Ensemble
- St Iltydd's primary school choir

### **1. Cyflwyniad a chroeso / *Introduction and welcome***

New Chair, Phil Lord began the meeting by welcoming members to the General Offices in Blaenau Gwent and thanking the children for their musical welcome. Phil also thanked Gavin Craigen for the extensive work he had done for WASACRE during his many years' service to the Association and explained to members that Gavin resigned as Chair of WASACRE this summer.

Lynnette Jones, Director of Education for Blaenau Gwent and Keren Bender, Chair of Blaenau Gwent SACRE made the official welcome to members and wished them well for an engaging and productive meeting.

Year 9 Pupils from *Ebbw Fawr Learning Community Secondary Phase* gave a presentation on why religious education lessons are important to them, and children from St Iltydd's Primary School choir sang a thought provoking song called "Think before we speak".

Following these introductions two moving tributes were paid to our colleagues and friends who had very sadly passed away this year. The first was to Ben Wigley, by Rheinallt Thomas and the second to Denize Morris, by Gill Vaisey. Following the two tributes members joined together in a minute silence.

### **2. Adfyfyrion tawel / *Quiet reflection***

Phil asked members to think of Ben and Denize's contributions to WASACRE, the RE world in Wales, and beyond. He also asked members to consider their own contribution.

### **3. Ymddiheuriadau / *Apologies***

Tania ap Sion, Professor Leslie Francis, Helen Gibbon, David Kitchen

### **4. Cofnodion y cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd yn Yr Wyddgrug, 25 Mehefin 2015 / *Minutes of meeting held in Mold, 25 June 2015***

Minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

### **5. Materion yn codi / *Matters arising***

Item 3. LJ confirmed that the thank you letter was sent to Tudor Thomas on his retirement from WJEC and that WASACRE has received a reply from Tudor.

Item 5. Welsh Bacculaureate. Concerns were raised again over the security of religious education in KS4 with the implementation of the statutory Welsh Bacculaureate qualification as a timetabled subject. Members were concerned that some schools are using RE time on the timetable to teach Welsh Bacc. A teacher representative at the meeting said that it is hard to make provision for core RE within the Welsh Bacc that meets statutory requirement and that it will be a challenge for any school or RE department who has to do this. Members at the meeting agreed that the situation needs to be carefully monitored.

**Action: LJ will draft a letter before Christmas to SACRE Clerks to request information regarding what is happening in their local schools. A simple open ended survey will be attached which can be sent to each school to complete and return, making reference that SACRE's were concerned about the timetabling issue and want to support schools.**

Item 6. NAPfRE presentation by Mary Parry in March meeting. Gill Vaisey thanked Mary for sharing her work and for producing this useful resource and so generously making the CD Rom available to all secondary schools in Wales. Teachers are using it and it is working very well within RE schemes of work.

Item 9. EFTRE Conference. Phil Lord asked members present to feed information back to their own SACREs about the EFTRE conference which will take place on 31<sup>st</sup> Aug to 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2016. For more information regarding the conference, members were directed to the EFTRE Website.

Item 10. Religious Education guidance document. Gill is making good progress on this guidance and reminded members that the focus for it is on managing the right of withdrawal from religious education. Gill requests case studies from school/SACREs

Item 10. AOB. Rheinallt Thomas confirmed that *RE ideas* is now in colour and is being sent to all SACRE Clerks. An open invitation was given to teachers for them to help with *RE ideas*. A teacher from Wrexham has helped this year. Rheinallt was able to confirm also that teachers are paid for their time and work.

6. Cyflwyniad NAPfRE/ *NAPfRE presentation:*

Archwilio Ffydd yn yr Ysgol Gynradd gan Liz Arthur gydag athrawes Ysgol gynradd o Flaenau Gwent/ *Exploring Faith in the Primary School by Liz Arthur and Karen Fairburn from Ebbw Fawr Learning Community Primary Phase, in Blaenau Gwent*

Ebbw Fawr Learning Community, Primary Phase, held a very successful RE and Art Week as part of the yearly programme of 'subject weeks'. Throughout the week a number of guests from a range of faiths were invited in to school to meet and work with the children. The main objective of the week was for pupils to meet and interact with people of different faiths. A range of faith representatives and Christian denominations were represented. The children participated

in a variety of activities throughout the week which were planned and delivered by the faith representatives with help from the teacher leading the week and also from Gill Vaisey, who provided some of the resources.

The responses from pupils at the end of the week included comments like, “That was really interesting Miss, it’s more exciting learning from a real person” and, “I really enjoyed meeting Mr Sharma, he was the best bit. He knew lots about the artefacts and how they are used”. The responses from staff at the end of the week included comments like, “Children loved it and asked sensible questions because they really did want to know more about the religion” and, “Interaction with the children was outstanding and I learnt an amazing amount about religions I didn’t know”.

Phil Lord thanked Liz Arthur and Karen Fairburn for sharing the presentation, which received lots of positive comments from the floor. Suggestions from members about how the week could be developed were: to include representatives from different denominations from the non-Christian faiths also; to ask parents to send their child in with a religious artefact for a display during the week and for the children to explain to each other what the artefact means to them and how it is used in their family, as part of an interfaith dialogue activity; to include references to the current RE Framework and levels of attainment for RE in the planning of the event.

#### 7. Diweddariadau/*Up-dates*:

##### ***Cysylltiadau a chyfarfodydd Llywodraeth Cymru/ Welsh Government contacts and meetings – Libby Jones***

Libby introduced David Sargent, the new Welsh Government contact who was present at the meeting. Members were up-dated on the discussions which took place during the meeting on 30 September with Welsh Government colleagues, Steve Price, John Pugsley (Curriculum Division) and Karen Cornish (Head of review implementation team). The main focus of the meeting was on The Curriculum Review, Successful Futures and SACREs, other items discussed included the Review of Annual SACRE Reports, which, it was confirmed, would remain at 3 year cycle, and Welsh Government requests for guidance information on collective worship and for information regarding the number of Humanists who are members on SACRE.

Mary Parry made members aware of NAPfRE’s plans to produce a description of what good religious education is and to offer this guidance document to Pioneer schools who are responsible for writing/developing the curriculum for RE or Humanities as part of the next stage of the review process.

##### ***CCB Cyngor Addysg Grefyddol a chyfathrebu cyffredinol/ Religious Education Council AGM and general communication– Gill Vaisey and Phil Lord***

The AGM took place at Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha, in London which included a report from the new Chair, Trevor Cooling and an address from Rudi Lockhart the new Chief Executive. Members were informed that all information shared at the AGM was specific to religious education in England only and in order to improve this situation Gill Vaisey, who

represents WASACRE at REC meetings, has offered to send the appropriate information from Wales before each meeting if the CEO's address is sent to her in advance as requested.

Items on the Agenda included:

*Young Ambassadors*, which involved a video and presentation. 12 schools are currently involved in this initiative, including Ysgol Aberconwy from Wales. Gill Vaisey hoped that Phil Lord may be able to support the school as it was local to his area of work. An open invitation was offered to Faith groups to reach-out to the school ambassadors for RE, in order to support them and to receive support.

*Reviewing the legal and wider policy framework for RE*, which involved table discussions.

*Teacher Recruitment Campaign*, for which a professional video was shown.

Gill urged that it is worthwhile and important to continue to develop this relationship with the REC. Wales can support England as much as England can support Wales. Phil confirmed that Rudi Lockhart has already been in regular contact with him and is aware of what is happening in Wales.

Cyfarfod y Fforwm Ffydd/ *Faith Forum meeting* – Phil Lord

Phil Lord met with a number of faith group representatives from across Wales on Monday 23 November. Their main concern was what the Minister for Education and Skills had said in his recent speech regarding changing the name of RE etc. Phil has agreed to triangulate information with the representatives so that knowledge can be shared both ways.

Following this members raised some questions regarding the design of the new curriculum for RE and whether Ministers are fully aware of what RE is like today in Wales. Phil said that he would keep members up-dated'

**Cynhadledd Addoli ar y Cyd / *Collective Worship Conference* - Gill Vaisey look at the PP.**

Gill shared a PowerPoint presentation which summarised the main points covered at the conference and which is attached to the minutes as an appendix. Gill made members aware of a Report that was given out at the conference. A copy of the Report is available at:

[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3ijyaknnt5cl9jx/AAC8PyypvTS9t-zxPxs\\_E2Vta?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3ijyaknnt5cl9jx/AAC8PyypvTS9t-zxPxs_E2Vta?dl=0)

Gill assured members that the report merely sets out the facts as they stand today and the aim of the Report is to stimulate fresh thinking on the subject of collective worship in schools.

**Action: LJ will arrange the meeting between Welsh Government colleagues, the academics leading this initiative and representatives from WASACRE.**

8. Cyflwyniad NAPfRE / *NAPfRE presentation*:

Manylebau TGAU diwygiedig ar gyfer Astudiaethau Crefyddol/ *Revised GCSE Specifications for Religious Studies- Lynda Maddock, WJEC*

Lynda Maddock is the newly appointed Subject Officer for Religious Studies at WJEC. Her colleague Andrew Pearce is responsible for Religious Studies AS and A2 and Lynda directed those who have questions about AS or A2 to Andrew.

AS and A2: Lynda assured members that information on the current AS and A2 is available on the WJEC website and that in Wales the AS qualification can be standalone but also counts towards A Level if it is sat. Where as in England, the AS qualification is standalone only and **does not** count towards A level. The A level qualification in England is standalone.

Members were informed that Hodder are publishing books for the RS specification in England, but that nothing has been decided yet for Wales. WJEC have had to include non-religious beliefs in at least one part of the Religious Studies specification due to Humanist lobbying.

GCSE: WJEC have requested a year's postponement for the new RE specification, but Qualifications Wales has rejected their request.

Lynda described the new specification for England explaining that it has relevance for Wales in as much as, there needs to be parity in the quality and standards of both qualifications to ensure fairness and equality for students in both countries.

In Wales there will be one specification only and it will retain a unitised approach so that Year 10 pupils can still be entered for a Short Course after one year of study. It was confirmed that pupils can also sit just one Short Course exam (Either Unit 1 or Unit 2) at the end of the two years, or sit both Short Course exams (Unit 1 and Unit 2) to receive a Full Course qualification. It is hoped that Unit 1 will be similar to the current Spec B, and Unit 2 will be similar to the current Spec A.

Unit 1 is likely to include religious responses to philosophical issues, where students will be asked to choose two religions through which to study themes like, life & Death and Good & Evil. In addition to this students will study the core beliefs teachings and practices of two religions.

Unit 2 is likely to include religious responses to Ethical issues, where students will be asked to choose two religions through which to study themes like, Relationships, and Human Rights. In addition to this students will study the core beliefs teachings and practices of two religions.

It is most likely that Christianity will be made the compulsory religion for this specification and students will be required to choose one other religion to study. Both Units will make a full course and only one Unit will make a short course

Other information included the following: Catholic Schools will do 75% Catholicism and 25% Judaism and the title of the course will reflect this; There will be no course work for the RS GCSE; The revised specifications and sample assessment material are due to go to Qualifications Wales on 18 December and it is hoped that the final draft will be ready in time for the WJEC Inset for teachers in the spring.

SACREs are invited to write to the Chief Exec of WJEC to voice any concerns that they have.

**Action: LJ will write to WJEC to voice WASACRE's concerns including a request to delay the specification for one year and to request information about Unit one to go on the website in January, to help teachers with their planning. LJ will send a copy of the letter to SACRE Clerks before Christmas.**

Phil Thanked Lynda for her presentation and assured those present that WASACRE will continue to support and work with WJEC.

9. Adolygiad Cwricwlwm / *Curriculum Review*- Libby Jones

A written up-date on this item is attached to the minutes as an appendix.

Bethan James, Chair of NAPfRE thanked Phil for representing WASACRE (and NAPfRE) and requested a brief written up-date for SACREs from that meeting in December in order to help colleagues answer any questions they receive from teachers. Phil Agreed to do this.

Adroddiad ar gyfarfod y Pwyllgor Gwaith a gynhaliwyd ar 30 Medi 2015 / *Report from the Executive Committee held on 30 September 2015*

The report was accepted and agreed as accurate.

10. Gohebiaeth / *Correspondence*

Libby shared a number of letters and emails as correspondence, most of which had already been dealt with in the meeting.

11. U.F.A. / *A.O.B.*

12. Dyddiad y cyfarfod nesaf / *Date for next meeting*: 8 Mawrth 2016, Sir Benfro / 8 March 2016, Pembrokeshire

Dyddiadau cyfarfodydd yn y dyfodol / *Future meeting dates*: Haf / *Summer 23/6/ 2016* Sir Ddinbych / *Denbighshire*; Hydref / *Autumn 18/11/2016* Sir Gaerfyrddin / *Carmarthenshire*; Gwanwyn / *Spring 2017* Sir Fynwy / *Monmouthshire*.

*Thanks to Clerk Emma Bailey and Manager of the General Offices, Lisa Osborne, Alan Williams, the School Improvement officer who arranged the music, and Stephan the Translator.*