



**Wales Association of SACREs meeting,
Virtual via Microsoft Teams
29th June 2022
10.30a.m. – 12.15p.m.**

Attendance

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| <p>Ynys Môn / Anglesey Dylan Rees (DR) Rheinallt Thomas (RT)</p> <p>Blaenau Gwent Kathy Riddick (KR) Chris Abbas (CA) C. Knowlson (CK)</p> <p>Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr / Bridgend Alice Parry (AP) Edward Evans (EE)</p> <p>Caerffili/ Caerphilly Marina Chacon - Dawson (MC)</p> <p>Caerdydd / Cardiff T. Saunders (TS)</p> <p>Sir Gaerfyrddin / Carmarthenshire</p> <p>Ceredigion Mary Davies (MD) Anne Ursuka (AU)</p> <p>Conwy Jennie Downes (JD) Phil Lord (PL) Roger Boon (RB)</p> | <p>Sir Ddinbych / Denbighshire Phil Lord (PL) Collete Owen (CO)</p> <p>Sir y Fflint / Flintshire Vicky Barlow (VB) Jane Borthwick Claire Homard (CH)</p> <p>Gwynedd</p> <p>Merthyr Tudful / Merthyr Tydfil</p> <p>Sir Fynwy / Monmouthshire Louise Brown (LB)</p> <p>Castell-nedd Port Talbot / Neath and Port Talbot Fiona Thomas (FT)</p> <p>Casnewydd / Newport Neeta Baicher (NB) Hayley Jones (HJ) Huw Stephens (HS)</p> <p>Sir Benfro / Pembrokeshire</p> | <p>Powys John Mitson (JM)</p> <p>Rhondda Cynon Taf Donna Graves (DG) Matthew Maidment (MM)</p> <p>Abertawe / Swansea Jennifer Harding-Richards (JHR)</p> <p>Torfaen</p> <p>Bro Morgannwg / Vale of Glamorgan</p> <p>Wrecsam / Wrexham Tania ap Siôn (TS)</p> <p>NAPfRE Paula Webber (PW)</p> <p>EFTRE Phil Lord (PL)</p> | <p>Observers: Sue Cave (SC)</p> <p>REMW Paul Morgan (PM)</p> <p>WJEC</p> <p>ESTYN</p> <p>Welsh Government</p> <p>REC Kathy Riddick (KR)</p> <p>Church in Wales Jennie Downes (JD)</p> <p>Catholic Education Service</p> <p>Qualification Wales</p> <p>Interfaith Network</p> <p>ADEW University Of Wales Rachel Bendall (RB)</p> <p>Presenters Partneriaeth Julian Nicholds (JN)</p> <p>Minutes (from recording) Jo Nicholls (JNI)</p> |
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1. Introduction and welcome

RS welcomed everyone (bilingually) to the summer meeting.

Claire Homard, Chief Officer for Education and Youth in Flintshire welcomed everyone (bilingually) as the hosting SACRE.

CH stated that it was an exciting time for WASACRE's work for religious education in Wales, with the move to the implementation of the new curriculum from this September. CH acknowledged that all SACREs have been extremely busy with the Agreed Syllabus Conferences (ASC). The new curriculum is focused on making provision for learners to develop and have appreciation of their belonging in their locality, in Wales and the wider world. Also, to experience the natural world, value the environment and work towards a sustainable future for us all.

CH mentioned that in our local Welsh communities, our schools and learners have a very rich history alongside their lived experiences to draw upon.

CH described Flintshire's highlights including the access to wonderful natural environments with the country parks and the beautiful coastline; a vibrant religious history which includes St Winifred's Well in Holywell; Basingwerk Abbey in Greenfield, Holywell, and the Friary in Pantasaph and a number of castles. Arts and culture are celebrated at Theatre Clwyd. There is a strong tradition to support the Welsh language and Flintshire contributes to the Eisteddfodau.

RVE within the Curriculum for Wales can offer a distinctive contribution to the realisation of the four purposes. There are opportunities through RVE for learners to experience a curriculum that is engaging, and it is timely to reflect on the four purposes as we start the meeting today.

We want our learners to be ambitious and capable; enterprising and creative contributors; ethical and informed citizens of Wales and the world and healthy and confident individuals.

2. Quiet reflection

RS mentioned that Wales is currently experiencing the greatest change in education in a generation. There is a fear of the unknown for practitioners, parents, and pupils. WASACRE can support schools, parents, and pupils with this challenge of a new way of learning.

RS led a quiet reflection on the opportunities and challenges ahead of the coming year for parents, teacher, and pupils.

3. Apologies

Apologies from Libby Jones, John Meredith, and Susanne Gooding from the Executive Committee.

Apologies from Catherine McCormack, Chair of Flintshire SACRE and from Gwynedd SACRE - Councillor Beca Brown, Councillor Paul Rowlinson and Gwawr Williams.

Note that Councillor Wayne Carpenter is to join the AGM only.

Note that Fiona Thomas, Neath SACRE is to join the WASACRE meeting only.

4. Minutes of the last meeting Microsoft Teams held on 2nd April 2022

LB identified a spelling mistake on page 10, 'pacifism' was misspelt.

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting held on 2nd April 2022. RT proposed to accept the minutes.

5. Matters arising from minutes of the last WASACRE meeting

Any matters arising from the meeting will be discussed or considered within our meeting today.

- RS stated that WASACRE had received queries linked with ASCs and acknowledged the delay in some ASCs due to the change of councils after the local elections. If any assistance is required, please contact RS or AP.
- With regards to the action on Page 8 for LB to send an email regarding the legislation, RS thanked LB for the email and confirmed that LB's email had been forwarded to the Welsh Government and will be addressed in the meeting today.
- RT expressed concern that with the continuation of the meeting using TEAMS there is no facility for Welsh translation. This does not adhere with the constitution. RS confirmed this has been discussed and will be on the agenda for the next Executive meeting, in early October, the return to face-to-face meetings for WASACRE meetings will be an agenda item.

6. Update on Professional Development materials

TaS gave the following update regarding the Professional Development materials.

TaS reminded the group of the presentation, given by TaS and LJ, at the last WASACRE meeting which detailed the work currently being undertaken by WASACRE and the Welsh Government.

On 26th April 2022, WASACRE led a Welsh Government Policy Insight event at which the draft professional learning playlists were shared. The event was well attended with n=105 attendees. The comments received during and after the event were very positive.

TaS recommends the WASACRE members to visit HWB and view the recording of the event. In particular, to listen to Kevin Palmer, Deputy Director Pedagogy Leadership and Professional Learning, Welsh Government. Kevin gave an important introduction of the event and demonstrated his support for RVE.

It was emphasised in the last WASACRE meeting the importance of the quality assurance (QA) process in the development of the resources. The ongoing QA team includes four WASACRE Executive Members as well as the Welsh Government colleagues. In addition to this, there is an external reference group who are reviewing the playlists in the final draft stages and HWB will be reviewing the playlists which also need to be translated into Welsh. TaS acknowledged it is a long process before playlists can be published and hence publication is slightly behind schedule.

In terms of publications dates, the resources will be published in three batches:

- ⇒ Group 1 will be published at the beginning of September. Group 1 consists of 'the 'What's New?' modules – for Head Teachers, Early Years, Primary, Secondary and ALN.

- ⇒ Group 2 will be published shortly after group 1 and consists of 3 modules: RVE and numeracy; digital competency and literacy.
- ⇒ Group 3 will follow in the autumn term – which includes RVE and the humanities and progress in and approach to pedagogy module for Head Teachers.

The project team are very pleased with the quality of the playlists. It has been hard work for the team and for the teachers writing the resources. The Teachers were receptive to feedback and are willing to continue with the process.

RS, on behalf of WASACRE, thanked the teachers, who have worked tirelessly on the playlist, and also thanked the team, who are conducting the monitoring and support. RS asked that WASACRE's appreciation and gratitude are passed onto the Teachers and the team.

7. Welsh Government Matters:

Meetings

A meeting was held on Thursday 23rd June 2022. RS was unable to attend, TaS and Libby Jones represented WASACRE, and PW represented NAPfRE.

TaS provided the following feedback from this meeting. Those attending from Welsh Government were John Pugsley (JP), Head of the Curriculum and Assessment Division and Ceri Davies (CD), Relationship Manager.

A summary of the agenda items discussed follows:

1) Process for the adoption of the AS for RVE

It was confirmed that SACREs are to send the Agreed Syllabus (AS) to JP and KD. These will be held for information purposes. If an LA has not adopted the AS by 1st September 2022, the Minister of Education and Skills is to determine the next step as there is no precedent set for this situation. It is recognised that it is problematic for a number of SACREs to meet the deadline due to the delay in legally constituting the SACRE and therefore a delay in the AS adoption process.

If the LA cannot agree the syllabus by the 1st Sept 2022, the LA should contact Welsh Government. The Welsh Government will take a common-sense approach and begin a process with their legal team. Welsh Government suggests that these LAs should ask schools to refer to the RVE guidance on HWB in the meantime until the agreed syllabus can be published.

2) RVE guidance on HWB and the amendments to the legal summary on HWB.

This has already been mentioned in Item 3 'Matters arising from previous meeting'. This refers to the email from LB.

Part of the legal summary section was confusing and required clarification. The aim is not to change anything but to clarify and ensure this section is easier to read and to understand.

Prior to this Welsh Government meeting, WASACRE Executive Members sent suggested amendments to the RVE legal summary section to JP.

JP confirmed receipt and these changes are now included in a revised draft which is currently being reviewed by the Minister of Education and Skills. Changes cannot be

shared until the Minister has approved. JP is going to send WASACRE a copy of the agreed changes before they are published on HWB. This should be sent in the next week or so.

Second part of agenda item 2 was the clarification for Early Years and RVE. There are a number of terms used to define Early Years, consistency, is required. It is understood that RVE is mandatory from 3 years and should be pluralistic from the age of 3. Welsh Government colleagues are coming back to us to provide clarity for early years to ensure there is clear and standardised messaging.

3) Standard letter to schools and parents re RVE.

A number of SACREs have asked that a standard letter is sent from Welsh Government to schools and parents informing of the changes, including the removal of the parents' right to withdraw from RVE.

CD confirmed that there is a meeting this week with the communications department, and this will be discussed.

Two audiences are recognised which should receive this letter - schools and parents. There is a need to ensure correct messaging for each audience.

Welsh Government regularly communicates information in a number of different ways regarding the curriculum. The Welsh Government suggested that a one-off letter wasn't the way forward and that it would be more beneficial to have an on-going communication process. It was suggested an initial communication is to be sent before the end of term and reinforced with further communication in September.

The Welsh Government requested WASACRE's requirements with regards to the content of the communication.

It was agreed the main areas to cover:

- ⇒ Change of name.
- ⇒ Mandatory nature of RVE.
- ⇒ Pluralistic nature of RVE.
- ⇒ Need for RVE to be objective and critical.
- ⇒ Removal of the parent right to withdraw from RVE.
- ⇒ For the letter to schools to include the need to accord with the Curriculum for Wales Framework and recognition that a new approach is required. In addition, the importance of schools adhering to the locally agreed syllabus.

A number of communications will be sent to schools through Welsh Government's communication process.

TaS asked, if there is anything that WASACRE members see as problematic, to inform TaS and the detail can be fed back to the Welsh Government.

4) RVE resources.

As RS mentioned in the quiet reflection with the new approach, there are numerous challenges.

WASACRE needs to ensure the provision of appropriate resources to support schools and reflect the RVE guidance and the Curriculum for Wales. Welsh Government is publishing a guidance pack shortly on resources.

When new resources have been published, the resources will be reviewed by a review panel before they are accepted for publication on HWB. This refers to classroom-based resource as well as PL resources. The best ways to provide useful support for practitioners, is very much on the Welsh Government's agenda.

5) Plans for ITE

PW raised the issue that PL is being developed for RVE within schools and among practitioners but what about the ITE sector.

Welsh Government explained that the ITE sector is Kevin Palmer's remit. This topic will be returned to over the next year. It was agreed that RVE playlists currently under development will be of use for the ITE Sector.

6) Circular 1094

Welsh Government confirmed that there are no immediate plans to revise 1094 although the issues of being outdated is recognised. For now, the following statement holds true – 'RVE 1094 is no longer relevant it is being moved across to the Curriculum for Wales Guidelines and Framework'. Welsh Government requests it is not referred to in terms of RVE. However, 1094 still relevant for collective worship.

In conclusion, TaS mentioned the meeting was very positive and productive. As a result, it was agreed to hold these meetings, between WASACRE, NAPfRE, and Welsh Government on a termly basis. The next meeting will be held in September and the length of the meeting is to be increased to one and half hours.

RS thanked TaS for the update and mentioned it was encouraging to see that Welsh Government value the role of WASACRE and NAPfRE.

JHR: Is the Welsh Government sharing the information regarding 1094 with LA's?

ACTION: TAS to ask Welsh Government whether the information regarding 1094 is to be shared

LB: Will a draft of the changes in the legislative summary be made available for checking?

RS: The proposed changes in the legislative summary will be sent to WASACRE before it is published.

PW: Confirmed that the proposed draft will be sent to WASACRE executive for approval and that it won't involve a consultation process.

PW: Pleased with the QA process for the resources on HWB. Welsh Government is also looking at the current resources available on HWB and conducting a quality check.

8. NAPfRE Presentation – Partneriaeth Consortium

JHR is Head of Social Science at a Bishop Gore Comprehensive School in Swansea. In the last year, JHR has been seconded for two days per week as RE / RSE advisor within Swansea. From September 2022, JHR is relinquishing her teaching commitments to take on the role of RVE and RSE advisor for Swansea, Pembrokeshire, and Carmarthenshire.

JHR presented Swansea Council professional learning offer for RVE for the past year. In summary:

4 PL sessions held across primary and secondary, which were well attended with 80 -100 colleagues. The recordings have been shared with colleagues across the region.

- March 2022: Guidance, unpicking RVE, the agreed syllabus
- May 2022: Curriculum planning for excellence
- June 2022: Sharing effective practice
- July 2022: Open Session for RVE Q&A – yet to be held

The committed RVE network in Swansea has been joined, in the last few years, by colleagues from Neath and Port Talbot. Open forum meetings have been held, twice annually, between 15 - 20 colleagues attending. These will continue over the next academic year and hopefully return to in person sessions.

All Headteachers and Senior Leaders (Primary and Secondary) have had the opportunity to receive professional learning regarding RVE within Curriculum for Wales.

All Governors across Swansea have had the opportunity to participate in a PL session to support with their role, this will be a continual program over the academic year.

There are active faith members and termly meetings have been held with religious/worldviews leaders within the community. These were high profile events within our local authority chaired by the Director of Education and will continue over the academic year.

Swansea SACRE have representatives from all of the main faiths identified within the census 2011(Swansea data). Group A is a proactive and progressive group, interested in exploring how they can support schools and teachers with RVE.

With the publication of the anti-racism action plan by Welsh Government, a session was conducted with RE today with Primary and Secondary colleagues supporting the development of anti-racist RVE. The session explored how to decolonise the curriculum and ensure it is in line with the anti-racist action plan. It was well attended in January with over n=100 colleagues. The Local Authority is funding repeats of the training in July with over n=50 colleagues currently signed up.

January to May 2022 was spent preparing for the development of the new agreed syllabus and to hold the AS meetings after the May local government elections.

During that time the agreed syllabus was co-constructed with all stakeholders:

- ⇒ A teachers' audit was undertaken which produced relevant findings that have been fed back into the AS process.
- ⇒ A pupil voice was undertaken using questions used from the RVE quality mark award. This produced rich findings to feed into the AS process.

- ⇒ Gained legal guidance .
- ⇒ Decision was made to review the process annually. Aware that not all schools will be moving forward with Curriculum of Wales in September, approx. 50% of secondary schools are not. Need to ensure the AS is constantly reviewed until it is firmly embedded and supports our curriculum designers in schools.
- ⇒ Received funding and currently working on RVE resources to support schools in developing their RVE curriculum. The priority is to ensure schools and teachers have the subsidiarity and flexibility that the curriculum allows and provide suggestions with regards to designing the curriculum to ensure it is subjective, pluralistic, and critical. Teachers across Swansea have been involved in the development and pilot work is being undertaken prior to publication in September.

Moving forward, currently working with schools and teachers in reviewing the PL offer for this year and what other support is required in providing excellent RVE. This will be utilised in setting up the RVE PL offer for 2022/2023.

JHR explained that the work has been collaborative across three LA's, Swansea, Pembrokeshire, and Carmarthenshire.

JHR introduced Julian Nicholls, Humanities Lead Advisor for Partneriaeth – a partnership across these three LA's - Swansea, Pembrokeshire, and Carmarthenshire. JN's role as an advisor is to support teachers and pupils for the new curriculum and new qualifications. JN ensures the teachers' voice is part of the RVE. Also supporting the practitioners with the changes to national priorities with regards to anti racism and decolonising the curriculum

JN provided an update:

- ⇒ RVE partnership
 - Supporting colleagues and discussing their requirements with regards to the changes to RVE to ensure coherence across Partneriaeth.
 - Ensuring humanities leads who may not be RVE specialists are supported
 - Responsive to the needs of teachers. Ensure teachers and leaders are involved from the outset.
 - PL on learning, progression, and assessment which places curriculum guidance in context with RVE.
 - Developing and growing examples and modelling good practice.
- ⇒ Anti-Racism
 - Regional PL programme putting Anti-racism at every level of leadership and practice.
 - Strategic approach to professional learning with DARPL, Universities, Race Council Cymru and other partners.
 - PL for Leaders and teachers in decolonising the curriculum.
 - Working with HEIs to provide opportunities for Close to Practice Enquiry for schools.

RS thanked JHR and JN for their presentation. Good to hear of the work supporting teachers with the new curriculum both with RVE and the anti-racism plan.

LB: How is the legal obligation reflected in the materials being produced?

JHR: Confirmed that the PL across Swansea has been focused on RVE and the legislations to ensure it is pluralistic, objective, and critical.

RB: It was mentioned that some Head of Humanities are not necessarily RVE specialists, is this a common issue?

JN: Not sure of the numbers but see this as an opportunity to support and advise those individuals without RVE specialism by adding an additional layer of support.

RB: It is key to the roll out of the curriculum that Heads of Humanities who are not necessarily RVE specialists understand the new curriculum and requirements for balance etc.

RS: This should be monitored and observed to ensure every school has the correct guidance and support either through Heads of Humanities or through other ways, as each setting is different.

RT: Informed the group that anti-racism materials have been created by the Methodist Church and the Free Church Council for England. It is currently being adapted for Wales and it will be translated into Welsh and available through HWB.

HS: Thanked JHR. It was mentioned an annual monitor will be undertaken. As the curriculum is locally school designed, is the evaluation to be done through Teachers or Head Teachers? How are you going to monitor this and know that a school is providing RVE? Cannot wait for ESTYN inspection report. See this as a potential issue.

RS: WASACRE, Welsh Government and ESTYN are in discussion with regards to monitoring RVE and the standard of RVE.

JHR: Preliminary conversations within SACRE meetings, talked about a number of approaches, primarily to ask the Head Teachers in their termly report to include RVE. This will be fed into SACRE meetings. In addition, the Teacher audit and Pupil voice will continue. Appreciate it is a learning curve.

AU: Anti-racism is very important but need to be careful as an American experiment with the critical race theory backfired. With regards to the word 'decolonising' which is a term commonly used, some universities are moving away from this terminology as democracy in universities is suffering. Also suggest encouraging the anti-slavery dialogue to be as local and relevant as possible.

JN: Planning to consider all perspectives to allow learners to understand from all views without shame. This will be managed with extreme care.

NB: There are recent publications detailing the use of the words and language used.

PW: With regards to anti-racism, we need to take advice from organisations such as DARPL and BAMEed Cymru.

9. Up-dates:

⇒ **REC**

KR: There is a new Executive Officer, Indy Nottage. All committee meetings have been suspended while the structure of the Committee is under review. Internal work is being carried out to assess the structure and the aims of REC. A considerable amount of work has been undertaken on the World View Projects. REC have stated that the handbook produced does not reflect the Welsh Curriculum and it should be referred to as a handbook for England. This was agreed.

Moving forward, for a future agenda item it would be beneficial to discuss the role REC plays in WASACRE and the role WASACRE plays in REC.

ACTION: At a future meeting discuss WASACRE and REC roles

⇒ **EFTRE**

PL: Recommends that the WASACRE members view the EFTRE website for updates. Interesting items around narrative and telling stories which is relevant in terms of looking at local curriculums. The EFTRE conference has been delayed until August 2023.

⇒ **REMW**

RT: RT is involved with Vaughan Salisbury and Libby Jones with adaptation of the anti-racist material into Welsh.

⇒ **NAPfRE**

PW: Met face to face for a whole day, yesterday. Really good to get back to in person with practical work in the afternoon. Responding to schools' requests and developing an exemplar RVE policy for schools. NAPfRE to share draft with WASACRE when available. Aim is to keep this document at a high level and ensure it is adaptable for schools because of subsidiarity. Basically, identifying relevant aspects of the framework and putting it into policy terms.

Other aims and objectives include work on a strategic plan and how we can strengthen our relationship with WASACRE after the impact of Covid19 and the absence of face-to-face meetings.

NAPRE are writing to Welsh Government to ask for a review of the annual report writing process. There are many changes such as the way ESTYN work and the way GSCEs are reported, an update is needed. Could WASACRE write a letter to Welsh Government about this as well?

Talked about the Government's Anti-Racism plan. NAPfRE are to link with DARPL and BAMEed. This is a big agenda and needs to ensure RVE is contributing to this discussion and managing the right to withdraw. With the latter, there is a need to positively engage with communities who might have issue with RVE, such as Jehovah Witness and Traveller communities, to mitigate any issues with the right to withdraw being removed.

Some of advisers raised the issue of PL for non-specialists, is there enough PL available? It was previously mentioned that WASACRE was to put on a conference after the PL resources are completed. Can this be put back on agenda?

Request to have WASACRE meeting dates as early as possible as NAPfRE organises its meeting the day before the WASACRE Meeting.

RS: Agrees that the annual report process need to be updated. With regards to the PL for non-specialists, agrees this is a very important issue and WASACRE is to discuss this in the next meeting. WASACRE will aim to release dates for the meetings as soon as is possible.

RS: The concept of the conference has been put in the background but looking to reinstate within WASACRE's agenda for the coming year.

PW: NAPfRE is a large group of advisors from all LAs and other organisations. Its structure is different from years ago. NAPRE would like to work with WASACRE in developing the conference.

RS: Welcomed the help from NAPfRE with setting up the conference.

ACTION: RS to share at the Executive Meeting NAPfRE's request to write a letter to Welsh Government regarding the annual review process.

ACTION: PL for non-specialists to be included in the WASACRE agenda.

10. Report from the Executive Committee held on 17 May 2022 (Rachel Samuel)

The last meeting was held on 17th May 2022, much of the agenda has already been discussed in this morning's meeting or will be discussed at the upcoming AGM this afternoon.

There was a discussion on the constitution which is being addressed at the AGM. Nominations for the Executive Committee and the voting procedure were discussed. Voting slips have been collated. Any SACREs that have not returned their voting slips or have sent them to Libby Jones on Friday or afterwards, need to forward them ASAP to AP so they can be finalised and collated ready for our AGM.

Discussed the Welsh Government and PL resources which has already been mentioned at Agenda items 6 and 7.

A question was raised from Cardiff and the Vale with regards to the numbers of GSCEs, with a request to put on as an agenda item in the next WASACRE meeting. RS confirmed that this will be an agenda item in the coming year to look at the GSCE and A Level situation for Religious Studies and provide an update on figures. Possible discussion points as to how and why things are changing? Can the trend be reversed or is it due to a change in environment in examination with the new curriculum?

11. Correspondence

AP: Chris Abbas, of the Bahai faith, sent an event flyer for 'Freedom of Religion and Belief Conference' taking place tomorrow, St Mary's Church, Bute Street, Cardiff. Anyone interested please contact AP.

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

RB: When discussing the move to face-to-face meetings for WASACRE, can the meetings be hybrid given the distance involved.

RS: This will be discussed at the Executive Committee meeting and the outcome reported to the WASACRE members.

ACTION: Meeting format to be discussed at next WASACRE Executive meeting.

13. Date for next meeting: Autumn 2022 TBC

DRAFT