

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

Minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2023

PRESENT: Councillor Non Dafydd (Chair)

The Education Authority

Councillors Douglas M Fowlie, Gwilym O Jones

The Religious Denominations

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)
Mr Owain Roberts (Ysgol Cybi)

Co-opted Member

Mr Rheinallt Thomas

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

APOLOGIES: Councillor Dylan Rees
Councillor Arfon Wyn
Mrs Elaine Green (The Presbyterian Church of Wales)
Rev Neil Ridings (The Church in Wales)
Mrs Mefys Jones-Edwards (Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones,
Amlwch)

The Chair welcomed all those present to the SACRE's first hybrid meeting.

The Chair remembered the late Councillor Alun Mummery, who passed away recently. She referred to him as a friend and loyal member on the SACRE for many years, whose contribution will be greatly missed. She extended the SACRE's condolences to Councillor Mummery's family at this very difficult time.

The Chair also asked the SACRE to remember the late Mrs Catherine Jones, who had also represented the SACRE over a long period. The Chair reported that she had fond memories of Mrs Jones, who had been a diligent member, whose contribution was well received at all times.

At the Chair's request, the SACRE observed a minute's silence in remembrance of the late Councillor Alun Mummery and Mrs Catherine Jones.

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None received.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting of the SACRE held on 12 October 2022 were presented and confirmed as correct.

Matters arising from the minutes:-

- The RVE Advisor reported that she has not contacted Estyn's Chief Inspector in relation to the lack of reference to Christianity as the main religion in Estyn inspection reports, as the method of inspecting schools is currently in its transitional phase. It was noted that Estyn quoted in a recent NAPfRE meeting that *"it continues to be a period of change, and guidelines on expectations will be developed over time"*.
- The RVE Advisor suggested that the SACRE's concerns regarding Estyn inspection reports be raised with the SACRE's Operational Panel in due course, rather than with Head Teachers.
- The RVE Advisor suggested that Head Teachers from schools that have undergone recent Estyn inspections be invited to present examples of their pupils' work.

Concerns were raised that legislation states that Christianity is the main religion in Wales, but this is not reflected in the Agreed Syllabus Guidance.

The RVE Advisor quoted from the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 that teaching and learning provided:-

- (a) must reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Wales are mainly Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Wales, and*
- (b) must also reflect the fact that a range of non-religious philosophical convictions are held in Wales.*

RESOLVED to invite Head Teachers from schools that have recently been inspected to present examples of their pupils' work to the SACRE.

3. DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ANGLESEY SACRE 2021/22

The Chair read out the Chairman's Summary from the Anglesey SACRE's Annual Report and thanked Councillor Dylan Rees for his leadership over the past 9 years.

The SACRE accepted the Draft Annual Report for 2021/22, subject to the correction of minor errors noted in the meeting. The Chair thanked the RVE Advisor on behalf of the SACRE for her excellent work in preparing a comprehensive Annual Report for the Ynys Môn SACRE.

RESOLVED:-

- **That the RVE Advisor prepares an Action Plan to record progress on the SACRE's recommendations in the Annual Report, which are continually evolving.**
- **To adopt the SACRE's Draft Annual Report for 2021/22, subject to the correction of minor errors.**
- **That the RVE Advisor forwards a copy of the final version of the SACRE's Annual Report to Welsh Government.**

4. THE PILGRIMAGE PROJECT BY THE CHURCH IN WALES

The RVE Advisor reported that she attended a meeting with Mrs Manon Williams from the SACRE and Mrs Elin Owen from the Bangor Diocese in January, to discuss ways to outline and develop the "Llan" 5 year project by the Church in Wales. It was noted that the Bangor Diocese are in the process of appointing an Education Officer, who will collaborate with schools in Anglesey on the project.

The RVE Advisor reported that she will ask Head Teachers in Anglesey to nominate a representative from the primary and secondary sector to join the SACRE's Operational Panel. She stated that the Church in Wales project will be central to the Panel's work to promote RVE and will be shared with schools across the region.

Mrs Manon Williams reported that schools from different catchment areas will be able to participate in the "Llan," and "Pererin" projects. She stated that the Church's original plan for "Llan" was to focus on St Cadfan and present a show 'in character'. The actor Llion Williams has been portraying St Cadfan in schools, and the Diocese has prepared learning resources to coincide with these activities. The intention is to present the show in Chapels and Churches in each catchment area, and invite pupils from different schools to attend, along with religious leaders. She stated that what has already been achieved within the project can be used as a template for schools, and the pattern of St Cadfan can be followed in a local or wider area. She further stated that a lot of money has been invested to bridge children between the primary and secondary sector and suggested that expertise from the secondary sector could be utilised to create a bridging project for pupils in Years 6 and 7 to work together.

RESOLVED to note the information presented.

5. WALES ASSOCIATION OF SACRES (WASACRE)

The draft minutes of the WASACRE meeting held on 16 November 2022 were submitted for information and noted.

The Chair read out a letter from WASACRE inviting SACREs across Wales to submit nominations for two new members to sit on the WASACRE's Executive Committee. It was noted that each SACRE can only nominate one member to the Executive. The Chair requested that any nominations should be sent to the RVE Advisor as soon as possible, so that they may be forwarded to the WASACRE's Secretary by the closing date of Friday, 31 March 2023.

It was highlighted that no one from Anglesey or Gwynedd has represented the WASACRE's Executive Committee for a while, and there are no Welsh speakers on the Committee at present. A nomination was put forward and seconded in the meeting for the Chair, Councillor Non Dafydd to join the Executive. The Chair responded that she would like to have time to think about the nomination, and would respond in due course.

RESOLVED:-

- **To note the draft minutes of the WASACRE meeting held virtually on 16 November 2022.**
- **To note the information presented for nominations to the WASACRE's Executive Committee.**

6. ANY OTHER MATTERS

Concerns were expressed regarding poor attendances at Ynys Môn SACRE meetings. It was highlighted that one elected member has not attended any SACRE meetings, and needs to be encouraged to attend.

Mr Rheinallt Thomas reported that he circulated the Free Church Council of Wales 'Guidance for Primary and Secondary School Visits' and 'Linking Churches and Schools' to the SACRE. It was noted that the SACRE had received the documents, which are relevant to RVE in the New Curriculum, and to observe Collective Worship in schools. He stated that the documents could also be shared freely if members of the SACRE desired.

The RVE Advisor suggested that the SACRE resume visits to schools to observe Collective Worship, and experience the good work that is being carried out in Anglesey schools, which is important in the context of the New Curriculum. It was suggested that a timeframe to reconvene Collective Worship visits to schools be discussed in the Head Teachers' Strategic Panel's next meeting on 23 March 2023. Mr Owain Roberts reported that schools are in the process of delivering the New Curriculum but stated that he would be happy to arrange a visit for SACRE members to attend Ysgol Cybi in due course.

The RVE Advisor reported that Estyn have recently undertaken inspections in the following schools, which will be discussed in the SACRE's next meeting - Ysgol Cybi, Holyhead; Ysgol Gynradd Beaumaris; St Mary's, Holyhead; Ysgol Uwchradd Bodedern; Ysgol Caergiliog; Ysgol Esceifiog, Gaerwen. It was noted that further inspections will take place this week at Ysgol Goronwy Owen, Benllech and Ysgol Moelfre. The RVE Advisor stated that four non-maintained settings were also inspected this term - Cylch Henblas, Cylch Rhoscolyn, Cylch Kingsland and Caban Enfys. It was noted that the inspections were successful,

and two case studies followed on from these inspections. It was further noted that as RVE will now be taught to children from 3 to 16 years of age, it may be an option for the SACRE to consider visiting those settings in future.

The Chair reported that Mrs Gwyneth Hughes, the RVE Advisor will be retiring soon. The Chair, on behalf of the SACRE, thanked Mrs Hughes for her guidance, hard work and commitment to the SACRE since 2018, and wished her every happiness in her retirement.

Mr Rheinallt Thomas reiterated the Chair's words and reported that it is not easy for people who are not experts in the field of RE to cope with all the elements involved. He stated that the SACRE have been very impressed in the way she has undertaken the role.

Mrs Hughes reported that it has been a privilege to work for the Council as an Education Officer since 2017 and will miss her involvement with the SACRE since 2018.

RESOLVED:-

- **To note the information presented.**
- **That the RVE Advisor raises the issue of a timeframe for reconvening visits to schools to observe Collective Worship in the Operational Panel's next meeting.**

7. NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the SACRE's next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 12 July 2023 at 2.00 pm.

8. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was RESOLVED:-

“Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, to exclude the press and public from the meeting during discussion on the following item on the grounds that it may involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A (Category 16) of the said Act.”

9. TO REVIEW THE SACRE'S CONSTITUTION

The RVE Advisor's report was submitted, to review the SACRE's Constitution, following proposed legislative changes as part of the Curriculum of Wales developments by Welsh Government.

The Chair read out statements from Councillor Dylan Rees and Mrs Elaine Green, as they were absent from the meeting.

The SACRE considered the current Constitution and options available in accordance with the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021:-

“The Act provides for the appointment of persons who represent holders of non-religious philosophical beliefs in the same way as they permit the appointment of persons who represent holders of religious beliefs”.

The SACRE were of the opinion that as 40.7% of the population on Anglesey do not follow a religion, appointing a non-religious person would reflect diversity at a local level.

A formal vote was undertaken to reach a decision, which was agreed by Groups A, B and C.

RESOLVED to recommend that the Executive approves the SACRE’s decision to appoint a new representative to the SACRE, from a member of a group with non-religious philosophical conviction, and not an individual member.

The meeting concluded at 3.50 pm

**COUNCILLOR NON DAFYDD
CHAIR**