

Attendance

<p>Ynys Môn / Anglesey Owen Davies (OD)</p> <p>Blaenau Gwent Chris Abbas (CA) Hayley Jones (HJ)</p> <p>Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr / Bridgend Alice Parry (AP) Donna Graves (DG)</p> <p>Caerffili/ Caerphilly John Taylor (JT) Marina Chacon-Dawson (MCD) Hayley Jones (HJ)</p> <p>Caerdydd / Cardiff John Taylor (JT) Donna Graves (DG)</p> <p>Sir Gaerfyrddin / Carmarthenshire Jennifer Harding Richards (JHR)</p> <p>Ceredigion Keith Evans (KE) Mary Davies (MD)</p> <p>Conwy Phil Lord (PL) Collette Owen (CO) Ellie Chard (EC)</p>	<p>Sir Ddinbych / Denbighshire Phil Lord (PL) Geraint Davies (GD) Leah Crimes (LC) James Brown (JB) Ruth Thackray (RT)</p> <p>Sir y Fflint / Flintshire Vicky Barlow (VB) Lyn Oakes (LO)</p> <p>Gwynedd Paul Rowlinson (PR) Eurfryn Davies (ED)</p> <p>Merthyr Tudful / Merthyr Tydfil Donna Graves (DG)</p> <p>Sir Fynwy / Monmouthshire Louise Brown (LB) Hayley Jones (EAS) Suzanne Gooding (SG)</p> <p>Castell-nedd Port Talbot / Neath and Port Talbot Nia Jenkins (NJ) Rachel Samuel (RS)</p> <p>Casnewydd / Newport Hayley Jones (HJ) Huw Stephens (HS)</p>	<p>Sir Benfro / Pembrokeshire Jennifer Harding Richards (JHR)</p> <p>Powys John Mitson (JM)</p> <p>Rhondda Cynon Taf Mathew Maidment (MM) Donna Graves (DG)</p> <p>Abertawe / Swansea Jennifer Harding Richards (JHR)</p> <p>Torfaen Hayley Jones (HJ)</p> <p>Bro Morgannwg / Vale of Glamorgan Kathy Riddick (KR) Donna Graves (DG)</p> <p>Wrecsam / Wrexham Tania ap Siôn (TS) Libby Jones (LJ)</p> <p>NAPfRE Paula Webber (PW)</p>	<p>Observers:</p> <p>REMW</p> <p>WJEC Chris Owens (CO)</p> <p>Estyn Aranwen Morgans-Thomas (AMT)</p> <p>Welsh Government</p> <p>Church in Wales</p> <p>Catholic Education Service Angela Keller (AK)</p> <p>Minutes (from recording) Jo Nicholls (JNI)</p>
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Minutes of the meeting

1. Introduction and welcome

TaS welcomed everyone to the summer meeting and thanked the Denbighshire Local Authority and SACRE/SAC for hosting the meeting. TaS welcomed and introduced the Head of Education Service for Denbighshire, Geraint Davies.

Geraint Davies formally welcomed everyone to the meeting. Geraint introduced the meeting with the following:

The curriculum has gone through a great deal of change over the last few years. Religion, Values and Ethics has taken the place of Religious Education. The law has formalised the inclusion of non-religious philosophical convictions and the voluntary aided sector now must have regard to a locally agreed syllabus also.

These changes have been a challenge to our schools, with every challenge comes exciting opportunities for staff to be creative to provide a truly local curriculum. The opportunities to ensure that RVE feeds into the four purposes is integral to the new Curriculum for Wales. These changes allow our pupils to be healthy confident individuals and have secure values and establish their spiritual and ethical beliefs. These opportunities help shape them to become ethically informed citizens and to respect the rights and needs of others in our diverse society.

Geraint Davies gave examples of Denbighshire's history with regards to faith and belief and reflected on how it will change in the future.

The 21st century has seen great advancement in technology and that has impacted and continues to impact on our lives.

There is a need to equip our young people with the skills to critically engage with beliefs and the benefits from the society they live in and embrace the increasingly intercultural communities that we all serve.

TaS thanked Geraint Davies for his introduction and for hosting the meeting.

2. Quiet reflection

In May 2023, LJ and TaS represented WASACRE at the NASACRE conference in London. NASACRE were celebrating 30 years of the Association, supporting the SACREs of England.

Even though it is clear that the education systems in Wales and England are becoming increasingly different there is a distinctive common history which is worth celebrating. A history centred on the significant local role given to SACREs and SACs for RVE and collective worship. A history in which during the last 3 decades a national association has been formed to the work for SACREs and SACs recognising both the value of the local but also the strength and support that comes with working together at a national level.

TaS led a quiet reflection, when members were asked to pause briefly and bring to mind their own local authorities that they were representing today. What have they got to offer to this meeting and the AGM today? What is that they can take back home with them to share?

3. Apologies

Apologies from the Executive Committee member, Edward Evans, Elin Stock and Kate Russell from Qualification Wales.

4. Minutes of the last meeting held on Zoom on 21st March 2023

Amendments to be made:

Page 1 Change Microsoft TEAMS to Zoom.
Page 2 JHR to be included as representing Carmarthenshire.
Page 9 Regional RE Hubs – changes to be made, TaS to forward exact details to Alice:

- Delete first sentence of the second paragraph.
- Misspelling of AREIAC and AULRE
- RE Today needs to be removed from the list of steering group organisations. (RE Today has not been on the steering group, rather 'the Regional RE Hubs is enable and supported by RE Today).
- NATRE can be added to the list as can TRS-UK and Culham St Gabriels.

With the above amendments, the minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting held on 21st March 2023

RS proposed to accept the minutes and HS seconded.

TaS will sign the final minutes and AP will file the minutes.

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

The name 'Regional RE Hubs' has changed to Regional RE Hubs UK.

Any other matters arising will be addressed in the agenda items of the meeting.

6. Welsh Government matters:

- 1) The only meeting since the last report was about the informal agreed syllabus review which was completed at the end of March. Welsh Government (WG) has put on record its thanks to WASACRE for undertaking the review of the agreed syllabi and are now in the process of responding to it.

We have a date scheduled to meet with Welsh Government colleagues about this and about specific matters such as the changes that WASACRE have asked for the legal section on Hwb.

- 2) National professional learning update – WASACRE are producing national resources in partnership with the Welsh Government. WASACRE presented the first batch of the national professional learning playlists at the Policy Insight Event on 25th April 2023. These have now been published on the WG Hwb. This event was well attended with over 100 attendees. It is recommended that all members visit the WG Hwb to view the playlists.

Work is continuing on the next batch of RVE resources and will soon be published in the early Autumn term. These will include RVE and cross-curricular skills – literacy, numeracy and digital competence, as well as a playlist for school governors.

A third batch of resources will cover pedagogy within RVE and RVE within the humanities.

7. NAPfRE presentation: Emerging practice from a 'faith' school perspective [Leah Crimes – Headteacher, St Brigid's School, Denbigh]

Phil Lord, the Advisor for Denbighshire introduced the NAPfRE presentation. Leah Crimes (LC) is the Headteacher of St Brigid's School, Denbigh. St Brigid's is a school for 3-18 year olds, located on the outskirts of Denbigh. It is a faith school with a designated religious character. The school's trust designates the school's character as Roman Catholic, but it is not associated with the Catholic Education Service nor the Diocese of Wrexham. As a result, the school does not follow the Catholic Education Service's religious education curriculum directly.

St Brigid's has been working with Denbighshire SACRE/SAC and PL and the school has planned RVE with regard to the Welsh Government's guidance on RVE and Denbighshire's agreed syllabus and its own designated religious character.

LC presented a sample of work in relation to the RVE curriculum. She stressed that it was a work in progress and was not suggesting that it is best practice. It has been created having regard to the agreed syllabus and looking at the history of St Brigid's School. They are basing the school's Curriculum for Wales and RVE curriculum on their cynefin with the history of school and beyond Denbighshire, and including a range of pluralistic views. LC will be working with PL to refine and improve the curriculum for September. It is a new way of teaching and has been well received by learners up to year 7 who have enjoyed the authentic experience.

A copy of the presentation will be sent to the WASACRE members. LC is also happy to share resources.

TaS thanked LC for the inspiring presentation.

LB: Thanked LC for the presentation. Suggested that manmade climate change would be better linked with stewardship rather than veganism. In relation to the sanctity of life, as pro-life is considered to be a non-religious philosophical conviction in the European Court, this could be included accordingly. Although currently Humanism is secular, in the past there have been Christian Humanists, worth considering looking at this in more depth.

LC: Thanked LB and agreed that climate change would sit well with stewardship and agreed to look into pro-life. LC thanks LW for raising these two points and explained that certain aspects have been condensed in the presentation. Good points to help us to refine our curriculum.

PW: Thanked LC for the presentation and the deep thought that has been put into the curriculum design. PW asked, how, in a practical way, did they unpack the statements of what matters during the curriculum design process?

LC: They planned backwards and looked at how their children could understand those statements and made sure that they provided them with the skills and experiences in order to hit those statements. They use a program called Taith360 but are still deciding whether it is of benefit. It is a program that displays all curriculum areas and it is used as a planning tool. It assesses your curriculum and produces a colour-coded output of coverage of the statements of what matters.

KE: Requested a copy of the slides.

LC: Happy to share the slides with the members and happy to talk with KE's school in Ceredigion.

LB: Is St Brigid's School under voluntary control rather than voluntary aided?

LC: St Brigid's School is a Voluntary aided school.

TaS: Wished LC all the best as they continue on their journey.

ACTION: LC to send a copy of slides to the secretary for onward distribution to WASACRE members.

TaS explained that there was difficulty with the Welsh translation and the meeting was paused while a solution was found.

8. Qualification Wales (QW)

RS: The consultation closed on 14 June. To prepare for this the WASACRE Executive Committee produced a short video and shared the Executive Committee's draft response with SACREs/SACs. SACREs/SACs were encouraged to respond and to share the information with teachers within their local authorities.

The Executive Committee responded to the consultation on behalf of WASACRE using opinions and comments previously shared. The main foci of the response were:

- Noting that a specific qualification is needed for Religion, Values and Ethics for a number of reasons, such as those shared within the draft distributed to the SACREs/SACs.
- The importance of obtaining a qualification within a mandatory subject and its value to the learners was emphasised.
- It was shown how it would support the Curriculum for Wales and the four purposes.
- It was emphasised that it would also provide an opportunity for progression within Religion Values and Ethics up to the age of 16.
- Attention was drawn to the problem that the new GCSE starts in 2025 and there will be a box until 2027 until the full proposal starts to be taught. What can be done to respond to the gap?

The next steps will be to wait to hear the results of the consultation. It will depend on the number of responses and their comments whether a qualification is suggested by Qualifications Wales. If they were to develop a qualification it will be a short qualification on Religion, Values and Ethics which will sit within the foundation qualifications. We have emphasised that if such a qualification is developed it will need to be available from entry level standard up to level 2 to ensure opportunities for all learners. If such a qualification is developed we are sure that Qualifications Wales will be in touch to receive help and support from the members of WASACRE as they develop the qualification. We will update you on any developments when we hear more.

The final design of the new GCSE will be published for development by WJEC on the 26 June.

TaS: Hopefully QW has received a large number of responses, and this will affect the outcome. TaS emphasised the importance of responding to consultations. WASACRE provides support to SACREs and SACs when responding to consultations.

9. EFTRE conference [August 2023]

In March WASACRE agreed to fully fund one teacher to attend the conference in August. TaS confirmed that one expression of interest was received from Alice Parry, WASACRE Secretary. TaS delighted that AP would be able to attend and asked AP to report back to the members after the conference.

10. Up-dates:

- **Report from the Executive Committee held on 17 May 2023**

TaS – most things are covered on the agenda.

The Executive Committee agreed to hold a WASACRE conference in the coming school year. Planning has commenced and will involve national professional learning and case studies. WASACRE's aim is to create an exciting, cutting-edge event. As is usual practice, WASACRE will work with NAPfRE with regards to planning. WASACRE will fully fund the conference. It won't just take the form of a full conference day but there will be a series of online seminars in the lead up to the conference. These will all be free to member SACREs/SACs and their schools / practitioners. More information to be shared in the autumn term.

It had been agreed to award the WASACRE Assistant Secretary an honorarium in recognition of the enormous amount of work being conducted in this role.

- **Estyn**

TaS: In the spring meeting Estyn provided a helpful briefing paper on Estyn inspection guidance for schools.

AMT: Thanked WASACRE for inviting Estyn to the meeting and pleased to hear that the briefing paper was useful. AMT reported that Estyn is in the process of preparing the new inspection framework for 2024. The consultation is open on the Estyn website and AMT encouraged responses. Estyn will be happy to provide a brief update at the next meeting.

TaS expressed thanks to AMT and accepted Estyn's offer to feedback at the next meeting. TaS reinforced the importance of responding to consultations.

- **WJEC**

CO: Thanked WASACRE for the invite to the meeting. WJEC is in full examination mode until the end of July and cannot speak to the current examination summer series 2023.

CO confirmed that there has been a fall in the number of candidates across GSCE, AS and A level for Religious Studies.

CO's responsibility is only GSCE RS, and the results will be released on August 24th, 2023.

Following up from RS's QW item, WJEC are waiting for the recent materials from QW from June 26th, 2023.

Worth noting that WJEC is in the process of appointing a subject advisor for RS and also looking for support to help with the writing of materials. The advert is displayed on the WJEC website. Looking for subject writers for the new specification. The remit is to help produce specification content in line with the qualification outline to produce assessment tasks, mark schemes etc. The deadline for applications is Friday 7th July 2023.

In the Autumn Term, the Professional Learning (formally known as CPD) will include face-to-face events scheduled for Cardiff and Llandudno and there will be a **Cardarg** (1.25.53 mins) PL event schedule to take place in North Wales.

TaS thanked CO for the helpful update.

- **REC**

KR: It was the REC's 50th anniversary at the start of May. A big event was held at Conway Hall in London, home of The Ethical Union. There was a presentation from the Children's Commissioner for England who was an RE teacher herself.

At the meeting KR presented on the progress in Wales with the new curriculum and recognised that most of the RE community in England would like to be moving in the same direction as Wales and have strong support from the Government acknowledging the importance of SACREs and SACs.

At the end of April, the REC had a meeting with representatives from Welsh Organisations who are part of the REC: that is, WASACRE, REMW and Church in Wales. We were able to give them our perspective on whether we believe that the REC is a place for Wales to be represented as the two countries' curriculums are diverging so much. It was noted that it is important that the REC recognises Wales in everything it does and that it does not become an England-centric organisation.

REC will now work on how Wales can be represented more fully in the work that the REC does.

TaS thanks KR for the update.

- **EFTRE**

PL encourages everyone to look at the website; there are interesting country reports available. The one for Wales has been finalised and is waiting for upload to the website. There are also training videos available on the EFTRE website.

TaS: Thanked PL for representing WASACRE on the EFTRE board.

- **REMW**

No representative present.

- **NAPfRE**

NAPfRE met last week. It was PW's first meeting back and PL has been covering for her.

NAPfRE have also responded to the QW consultation in line with WASACRE's response. NAPfRE is delighted and excited that WASACRE are going ahead with the conference and is looking forward to fully participating in the planning process.

The working party groups were reinstated last week to look at the most pressing issues. As well as the termly meetings, NAPfRE are going to trial a meeting once a month with additional twilight sessions to work on projects. If there is anything that WASACRE members would like NAPfRE to look at, then please contact PW.

Four issues are identified for WASACRE to consider:

- 1) The group met last week to discuss the SACRE/SAC Annual Reports. NAPfRE would like WASACRE to write a letter to Welsh Government asking for an update on the status of the current 1996 and 2006 versions of the annual report guidance document produced by ACCAC. NAPfRE considers this document to be out of date in terms of language content, current practice, curriculum etc.

The WASCRE members agreed to this request.

- 2) WASACRE has a meeting with WG on a termly basis, with a NAPfRE representative. PW asked whether there is a meeting planned before the end of term to discuss the annual reports.

TaS mentioned that WASACRE have a meeting scheduled with a specific agenda but will be in touch with PW to see what can be included in the time limit of that meeting.

- 3) NAPfRE recently discussed the nature of RVE in the new curriculum and how it was developed in the writing process and how it was written to be a rigorous subject discipline which has parity with the other humanities disciplines. This led NAPfRE to consider undertaking a piece of work which would tackle the myths and misconceptions which have risen, or potentially could arise around RVE. PW wondered whether WASACRE would be interested in this document 'myths and misconceptions' maybe an FAQ to be displayed on the website?

TaS stated that WASACRE would be interested to see the document once developed. WASACRE members agreed.

- 4) During the recent meeting DG in liaison with HJ produced a playlist for members of SACRE/SAC in order to help them to provide PL on their roles and responsibilities. DG asked NAPfRE to quality assure the playlist. PW wondered whether it would be of interest for WASACRE to house this on the website or share with other SACREs/SACs so they can access this playlist.

TaS: This sounds like a very welcome resource. It might also be useful to look at whether it can join a relevant area on the Welsh Government Hwb.

LB: Recalls the question of the Free Church Council guidance and the discussion about whether WASACRE could put this on its website also. It will be useful to look at the playlist first.

It is recognised that there is a whole process of quality assurance for Hwb and WASACRE would play a role in this given the playlist focus.

NAPfRE also discussed the document 'So you are thinking of joining your local SACRE' this was updated by RS and PW a while ago, but it requires a rewrite because legislation has been changed. Is it the right time to update this document.

TaS: Agrees that this is the right time and suggests going ahead.

ACTION: WASACRE members to contact PW with anything they would like NAPfRE to work on.

- IFN

LJ reported that the [Interfaith week](#) takes place from 12th - 19th November 2023. IFN are keen to have schools and organisations preparing early and to start thinking about how to use this week as a platform to highlight and deepen interfaith religion and belief dimensions of their work. Lots of activity ideas on the [Interfaith](#) website.

The Development of Levelling up Housing Communities will no longer be funding IFN and hasn't since April 2023. IFN's Board of Trustees and staff are working to address this challenging situation and the Board has met on a weekly basis to carefully review the financial position taking appropriate steps so that IFN's vital work can continue. They have asked for member bodies to write to ministers and other public figures to show support for the IFN.

TaS: This request will be taken back to WASACRE Executive Committee to consider writing a letter and to whom.

CA: Suggested to contact Interfaith Council for Wales for more localised news on Interfaith week.

11. Correspondence

- Email from CA with a flyer about a short video pilot project for young people.

CA: This is an initiative from the Interfaith Council for Wales requesting young people to create short films around service to community, in anyway way they wish. The endeavour is to show these at some stage to celebrate the organisation's 20+ anniversary this year.

TaS: Thanked CA for sharing this initiative and suggested that advisors might want to take this to their local SACREs and SACs and identify schools that might want to take part in it.

- Email from NAPfRE regarding the 4 points raised in item 6.

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

HS: On behalf of the Committee, HS thanked TaS as Chair and the Executive Committee members for their representation at meetings and reporting on behalf of WASACRE. This all involves considerable time and it is very important that this expertise is been given on their behalf.

TaS: Thanked HS for his support and acknowledgment.

13. Date for next meeting: Autumn Term,

This will be a Zoom meeting on Wednesday 25th October 2023 hosted by RCT.

TaS thanked Denbighshire local authority for hosting the meeting. The meeting ended at 11.50pm.

DRAFT