

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

Minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2024

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)

Co-opted Member

Mr Rheinallt Thomas (from 11:30am)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Marc Berw Hughes (Director of Education, Skills and Young People)
Mr Owen T Davies (Primary Senior Manager, Education) (RVE Advisor to the SACRE)
Mrs Shirley Cooke (Committee Officer)

APOLOGIES: Rev Neil Ridings (The Church in Wales)

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Chair reported on the heartbreaking news that Miss Bethan James, the SACRE's Supporting Improvement Advisor has sadly passed away, and offered her condolences to all who knew her. She asked Mr Owen Davies to say a few words in remembrance of Miss James, who had been his friend and colleague for over 20 years.

Mr Owen Davies paid tribute to Miss Bethan James and stated that she had been a very kind and caring individual, who had worked with the SACRE over many years. He stated that she had been an excellent educator in the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience and had a wealth of information and expertise in this field. She had worked as a consultant for Cynnal and more recently GwE. He stated that

Miss James' passing will be a huge loss to the Ynys Môn SACRE.

The Director of Education, Skills and Young People echoed the words already spoken about his friend and co-worker, Miss Bethan James. He stated that he had worked very closely with Miss James for the past ten years, and her passing will be a huge loss to education, Ynys Môn and to many on a personal level.

The SACRE observed a minute's silence in remembrance of Miss Bethan James.

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Dylan Rees declared a personal interest in Item 6 on the agenda, as he is a member of the Pioneer Movement.

2. MINUTES

The draft minutes of the previous SACRE meeting held on 16 November 2023 were presented and confirmed as correct.

Matters arising from the minutes: -

- The Primary Senior Manager gave an update on the resources that are available on Hwb, which include E-newsletters on Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) to support the work of designing the curriculum, which schools and SACREs can access. He stated that there are teaching modules to support the primary and secondary sectors with links to presentations on RVE, which will be shared with the SACRE.
- With reference to collating information on religious and spiritual settings on Anglesey, this matter will be discussed in Item 5 on the agenda.
- An update on the work of the Pererin Pilgrimage Project by the Church in Wales is ongoing. It is hoped that a member of the project can attend the SACRE's next meeting to provide an update on her work in preparing resources for schools.

3. WALES ASSOCIATION OF SACRES (WASACRE)

The draft minutes of the WASACRE meeting held virtually on 25 October 2023 were submitted for information and noted.

The Chair requested nominations for the WASACRE's Executive Committee. She stated that any nominations should be completed and returned to the Secretary to the WASACRE by 22 March 2024.

A member of the SACRE informed the Committee that the WASACRE's Conference this year will be held in Wrexham on 13 June 2024. The Primary Senior Manager reported that invitations to attend the conference will be forwarded to the SACRE following today's meeting.

RESOLVED that the Primary Senior Manager circulates a reminder for nominations to the WASACRE'S Executive at the beginning of March 2024.

4. LEARNING WALKS – YSGOL BODFFORDD

The Chair reported that she visited Ysgol Bodffordd with Mr Edward Morus Jones on a 'learning walk' on 6 February 2024, and provided a summary of her visit in the agenda papers. As part of the visit, the SACRE members attended a Christian collective worship session, which had a theme of 'love and kindness'.

Mr Edward Morus Jones gave feedback from his visit and reported that Ysgol Bodffordd has a Head Teacher, 3 teachers and 85 registered pupils. He stated that the pupils discussed the word 'arrogance', and the importance of kindness. The pupils answered questions and relayed how people from the community come to the school to participate in school activities e.g. 'Open the Book'. The school's motto 'Kind Words, Kinds Hands, Kind Feet' was also recited.

Both SACRE members reported that they had been impressed by the natural and relaxed atmosphere they had experienced at the school and felt privileged to have been included in discussion with the Head Teacher, teachers and pupils.

The SACRE were inspired by the way young people are adapting to change in our schools and appreciated the positive feedback received following the visit to Ysgol Bodffordd. It was highlighted that the SACRE will also need to be challenged and learn from the changes pupils are experiencing in schools.

Members of the SACRE felt that it would be beneficial to experience 'learning walks' in the secondary sector to promote collaboration between the SACRE and Anglesey schools. The Primary Senior Manager reported that the SACRE's next 'learning walk' will take place in Ysgol Gyfun Llangefni.

RESOLVED: -

- **To note the information presented on 'Learning Walks' for Schools.**
- **That the Primary Senior Manager plans the SACRE's next Learning Walk to Ysgol Gyfun, Llangefni.**

5. RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL SETTINGS ON ANGLESEY

The Primary Senior Manager reported that in the previous SACRE meeting, discussion had focused on selecting 2 or 3 religious and spiritual settings on Anglesey for the purpose of creating resources to share with Anglesey schools.

In response to the request for information, members of the SACRE put forward the the following locations for consideration, and gave a summary of their reasons for suggesting each setting: -

- Eglwys Unedig Noddfa, Trearddur Bay
- Capel Rhos y Gad, Llanfairpwll
- Anglesey Guide Centre, Penrhoslligwy
- Rhosyr area - St Dwynwen's Church, Llanddwyn Island, Aberffraw
- Newborough Church
- St Cybi's Church, Holyhead

- The story of St Cybi and St Seiriol; Fynnon Cybi, Holyhead and Ffynnon Seiriol, Penmon
- Llanbadrig Church, Cemaes
- Beaumaris – historic Church; St Tysilio Church, Menai Bridge and Llanfair PG
- Capel Cildwrn and Capel Penuel, Llangefni
- Llanfigael Church, Llanfachraeth
- Friend of Friendliest Churches
- Ebenezer Chapel, Rhosmeirch
- Seion Chapel, Llandrygarn
- The Catholic Church; Eglwys y Llan; Capel Mawr, Amlwch

Members of the SACRE reported that there are books available on religious settings in Anglesey. It was suggested that the SACRE works with the Libraries and Archives Service to create packages containing a variety of information. It was noted that a member of staff from the Pererin Project is currently working on resources for Anglesey schools, which include St Seiriol and St Cybi.

The Senior Primary Manager reported that he would contact staff in the Archives Service to request assistance in collating and presenting information on religious and spiritual settings. The SACRE would then have an opportunity to comment and approve the resources packages for schools in due course.

RESOLVED that the Primary Senior Manager contacts the Archives and Library Service to discuss and prepare the SACRE’s resources for schools.

6. MEMBERSHIP AND CONSTITUTION OF THE STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

The Director of Education, Skills and Young People reported that following legislative changes brought about by the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021, the requirement for a local authority to constitute a SACRE has been replaced by a requirement to constitute a Standing Advisory Council (SAC). The Director stated that the SAC’s brief is wider than that of the SACRE, as it now includes Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) within the Curriculum for Wales Framework. The SAC’s Constitution will also be different and should include representatives with non-religious philosophical convictions.

In March 2022 a report was presented to the SACRE suggesting that a Humanist be invited to join the SACRE. Following that meeting, legal advice was sought, and it was decided to review the SACRE’s membership in its entirety.

The Director of Education, Skills and Young People reported that Officers from the Learning Service have undertaken the task of collating and analysing data on all the different religious groups on Anglesey. Correspondence was sent to some groups to request their membership numbers, and the responses received have been included in the report. It was noted that although the data is incomplete, it has been used to provide a recommendation to the County Council, to progress the matter further.

The SACRE were asked to consider the recommendations in the report, i.e. to continue to offer seats to each of the six Christian denominations, which are the strongest religions on Anglesey (51.5%). In addition, to allocate a seat to a representative from Jehovah's Witness, Humanists UK and Islam. The proposed changes would ensure a fair representation of the Christian faith, other religions and non-religious beliefs, and would comply with statutory requirements.

Members of the SACRE highlighted discrepancies in the number of members quoted to represent membership of Christian denominations. The following update was provided by members of the SACRE: -

- The Presbyterian Church of Wales had 962 members in 2022.
- The figures quoted for the Catholic Church were for attendances on one day of the year and did not reflect the number of members of the Catholic Church.
- The Baptist Union of Wales has an additional 28 members from the Baptist of Great Britain Church who have not been included in the figures.

Members of the SACRE expressed concern regarding the figures quoted for membership of the Christian Churches, particularly the Pentecostal and Pioneer Churches, who could be labelled as charismatic, and have many active members. It was highlighted that if the figures for both these churches were combined, they would be much larger than one of the current Christian representatives listed in the report.

Discussion focused on the changes to the SACRE's Constitution to ensure more equality and diversity. It was suggested that the SACRE looks at its current membership and considers inviting churches with more members to join the SACRE.

The Director of Education, Skills and Young People responded that he would be happy to seek further legal advice on this issue and conduct a review following comments made at today's meeting in relation to the membership of the SACRE's Christian denominations in due course.

RESOLVED: -

- **That the SACRE recommends to full Council on 7 March 2024, that the name SACRE be changed to Standing Advisory Council (SAC) and that its Terms of Reference be included in the Council's Constitution by the Monitoring Officer, in accordance with the legislative requirement for the SAC; and**
- **That the County Council takes all reasonable steps to secure that the SAC's membership is broadly proportionate to the strength of each religion, denomination, or non-religious philosophical conviction, in its local area.**
- **That the County 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: -**
 - **Humanists UK**
 - **Islam**

- **Jehovah's Witness**
- **That a further review be conducted on the current Christian seats (thus, excluding Jehovah's Witnesses from the next consultation) following comments made when SACRE was consulted and the figures that have been received.**

7. ANY OTHER MATTERS

The Primary Senior Manager reported that he is preparing the SACRE's draft Annual Report, which will be presented to the SACRE next meeting.

8. NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the SACRE's next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 17 July 2024 at 2:00 pm.

The meeting concluded at 12:40 pm

**COUNCILLOR NON DAFYDD
CHAIR**